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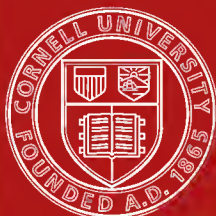
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LIFE OF PHILIDOR

BY

GEORGE ALLEN



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THE  
LIFE OF PHILIDOR

MUSICIAN AND CHESS-PLAYER

BY

GEORGE ALLEN

Greek Professor in the University of Pennsylvania

WITH A SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAY ON

PHILIDOR

AS CHESS-AUTHOR AND CHESS-PLAYER

BY

TASSILO VON HEYDEBRAND UND DER LASA

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the King of  
Prussia at the Court of Saxe-Weimar

*PHILADELPHIA*

E. H. BUTLER & CO.

LONDON C. J. SKEET PARIS G. BOSSANGE & C<sup>IE</sup>

LEIPZIG ERNST SCHÄFER

1863

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## P R E F A C E.

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**T**HE special and indispensable original sources of information for the life of Philidor are the following:—I. A biographical notice in the work of his pupil, La Borde (*Essai sur la Musique*, 4 vols. 4to. Paris 1760.) This notice was based on memoranda furnished by Philidor himself, rather over fifteen years before his death; but it brings his *personal* history down no lower than 1754, the date of his return from England.—II. The “*Anecdotes of Mr. Philidor, communicated by himself*” in *Chefs* [by Richard Twiss, F.R.S.] vol. i. 1787, pp. 149–71, with the additional anecdotes in *Chefs*, vol. ii. 1789, pp. 215–18, and the “*Closure of the account of Mr. Philidor*,” in Twiss’s *Miscellanies*, 1805, vol. ii. pp. 105–14. These anecdotes, while they confirm the notice of La Borde, are far more copious, and constitute the chief reliance of the biographer.—III. The article *Philidor peint par lui-même*, in the seventh volume of Saint-Amant’s *Palamède*, (pp. 2–16,) composed by J. Lardin from matter prepared by Philidor’s eldest son, André, who survived until 1845. It embraces a biographical notice, which the son had completed, and a number of random anecdotes. The notice contains little beyond what appears to have been derived from Twiss’s *Chefs*;

but the anecdotes, worthless as a portion of them may be, are of peculiar interest and value, for the light which they throw upon Philidor's personal character and habits.—IV. A specimen of the letters which Philidor was in the habit of writing home, during his annual visits to London. These important documents are found in the *Palamède* for 1847, pp. 172–8.

Now many Lives of Philidor have been written, in the shape of articles in works of general and special Biography; but they differ singularly from each other, in reference to the use made in them of the above-described original authorities. Of course, none but such as have been written since 1847 could exhibit anything derived from the matter furnished in Saint-Amant's *Palamède*. But of the others—and they are nearly all—it is a curious fact, that none but such as have been written by Chefs-authors (and I might even say by *English* Chefs-authors) have shewn any knowledge whatever of the *Anecdotes* of Twiss. Hence Mr. George Walker's very agreeable *Biographical Sketch* (prefixed to his edition of the *Analysis*, in 1832) and the appropriate chapter in Mr. Tomlinson's delightful *Amusements in Chess*, both based upon Twiss, are by far the best of all that appeared before André Philidor's posthumous notice. As to *French* Chefs-authors, all they have of Twiss has been obtained at second hand: the slight and inaccurate *Biographie*, for example, in the first volume of La Bourdonnais's *Palamède*—the production, most likely, of the lazy and careless “King of the Chess-board” himself—is made up from the *Biographical Sketch* of Mr. Walker; and the brief notice in the Comte de Baisterot's most attractive *Nouveau Traité élémentaire* appears to be based directly upon the corresponding chapter in the *Amusements* of Mr. Tomlinson.

As for the numerous lives of Philidor, written by

other than Chefs-authors—articles in Encyclopædias, Biographical Dictionaries, and Dictionaries of Musical History and Biography—these, whether French or English, are, for the most part, mere tracings after the sketch of La Borde, with only so much of unauthentic anecdote or gossip, as each writer might happen to pick up from casual sources of information. Of these, that which was contributed to the *Biographie Universelle* of the Brothers Michaud, by Sévelinges, is not merely defective, like the rest, but positively mischievous: it contains that calumnious charge of plagiarism, which has been regularly copied by the second-rate compilers, who have stolen their materials from that vast quarry. The very able article on Philidor, in M. Fétis's *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*, for its singular merits and its very original defects, stands entirely by itself. It is unique in the value of its criticism of Philidor's musical works—made, as it was, after careful study of the engraved scores, now so little known and so difficult to procure; and it is triumphant in its vindication of the probity, as well as of the genius, of Philidor. On the other hand, it is equally unique as a piece of personal biography. Fétis knew nothing of Twiss, and he wrote before André Philidor. Although a Chefs-player himself, and a frequenter of the *Café de la Régence*, he appears never to have read, or to have treated with contempt, the *Biographie* of La Bourdonnais's *Palamède*. Nothing was left him, therefore, but La Borde; and La Borde he regarded with a scorn so intolerant and so absolute, that he would not accept as satisfactory even those particulars of Philidor's foreign residence, which at the same moment he tells us were contributed by Philidor himself. Nay, when he finds the German, Gerber, repeating those same particulars, and substantiating them by independent testimony, he as little scruples to smother Gerber, as to throw overboard La Borde. To supply the lack of per-

sonal details, of which he thus robs himself, he is forced to fill up his sketch with *La Régence* gossip; and this, where it is, in its way, injurious to Philidor, has been unfortunately and unsuspectingly copied by the musical writers, who naturally defer to the high authority of Fétis—such as Adam, Scudo, and Pougin.

From that which I have thus, with all freedom, said of my predecessors, it may be sufficiently inferred, what I have myself aimed to make the Life of Philidor now presented to the Reader. It might, perhaps, have been more what it should be, if it had not been originally, like its fellows, a mere *article*—the fruit, too, of accidental authorship in the field of my recreations, rather than in that of my professional studies. The truth is, that, having succeeded in collecting a remarkable Chess-library—now one of the five or six in existence, that approach completeness—I was induced, in 1857–8, more readily than I could have supposed possible, to contribute to the *American Chess Monthly*, (which had then just been established by the able bibliographer and philologist, Mr. DANIEL W. FISKE,) a series of articles on the personal biography of Philidor, of which fifty copies were separately printed for private distribution. The reception of my biography, in either form, by the Chess-world, to which alone it was then addressed, was so unexpectedly favourable,\* that, when my illustrious correspondent, Herr VON DER LASA, offered to contribute a supplementary paper on *Philidor as Chess-author and*

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\* The celebrated French Chess-littérateurs, MM. DOAZAN and ST.-ELME LÉ DUC, in particular, made a most graceful recognition of what I had endeavoured to do for the memory of their great countryman, by publicly inscribing to me—the former his charmingly written monographs entitled *La Bourdonnais-Morphy* and *M. Alliey*, the latter a beautiful article in *La Régence* on his precious Ceylon Chess-board; and the learned German Master, Herr MAX LANGE, did me the honour to present a free version of my Biography to his countrymen, (with praise far beyond its deserts,) in the *Schachzeitung*.



*Chefs-player*, I decided at once—quite contrary to my original intention—to give the work a careful revision, and to publish it in the ordinary mode.

To be perfectly frank, however, I must own, that my decision was not a little affected also by the temptation to indulge certain philobiblician tastes of mine, long suppressed but profoundly inveterate. Laying to my soul the flattering unction, that better Grecians than I had been bitten with the *Bibliomania*—that Brunck, for example, (who was a gentleman and a soldier, before he was a scholar,) never put forth one of his editions without having copies printed on Large Paper and at least one for himself on Vellum—I accepted it as a good reason for publishing my own trifling volume, that I should thereby have the opportunity of “inaugurating” book-printing on Vellum in America.\* The supposed difficulty of the undertaking gave it the charm of an adventure. From Dibdin—with whose pages I had often dallied too fondly—I had learned, that the English experiments of his day, although made by a Bulmer, had been decided failures, the cause of which lay (as he believed) in the bad quality of the imported material. With entire confidence in the skill of our Philadelphia pressmen, I was equally sure, that the relations of my friends, Messrs. JOHN PENINGTON & SON, to the honourable house of HECTOR BOSSANGE & C<sup>ie</sup> at Paris would secure me the best vellum to be had anywhere. Nor was I disappointed. M. BOSSANGE Senior—ever ready to oblige his American

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\* In mercy to future Panzers and Van Praets, I will reconcile beforehand some apparent conflict of dates by stating precisely, that after the work had been carried on into the last sheet of the Life proper in 1859, it was suspended; and that, before it was resumed, (viz., in the spring of 1860,) two copies of another little book of mine (the *Novena to St. Antony of Padua*, pp. viii and 1-24,) were printed on Vellum in the same Office; while Mr. GEORGE LIVERMORE, of Boston, had three Vellum-copies of the *Souldiers Pocket Bible* (pp. viii and 1-16) executed by Mr. Houghton, of the Riverside Press, Cambridge.

*clientèle*—not only caused the skins to be examined and selected by an *expert*, but also forwarded me, from the same source, full and minute instructions for the guidance of the pressman—the want of which was the *real* cause, I suspect, of the failure of Bulmer. With such ample preparations and precautions, the work has been executed with entire success.

I have only to state, in conclusion, that I have been induced, by the consideration that but few take any interest in Bibliography, to detach from the Life of Philidor the original Appendix on the editions of the *Analyse*. This *Bibliotheca Philidoriana* will, however, be speedily printed by itself, with many corrections and additions.

G. A.

PHILADELPHIA, June 13th, 1863.





[*Prefixed to the private edition of 1858.*]

TO

DANIEL WILLARD FISKE, Esq.,

EDITOR OF THE CHESS MONTHLY.

MY DEAR FISKE,

To no one, with so much propriety as to you, could this poor attempt at Chess-biography, in its present form, be inscribed, for it has been yours from the beginning. You led the way to it, by your own beautiful lives of Gustavus Selenus and of Domenico Ponziani. It was written *for* you—to relieve you from some portion of your editorial labours, during your absorbing engagements with that First American Chess-Congress, whereof you were, at every stage, so large a part. And when I appealed to the good-nature of our common friend, Mr. Miller, to allow me the troublesome favour of a separate impression, what I had chiefly in view was the opportunity, by dedicating it to you, of expressing how highly I estimated the value of your services in the cause of American Chess and of American Chess-literature. I must add, however, that as the work began to reach its conclusion, an additional motive for such collective impression began to force itself upon my mind. I reflected,

that there still remained many unpublished letters of Philidor—that there still survived many recollections and traditions, by which some of his opinions, some of the events of his life, and the circumstances of his solitary death and burial might be cleared up; and I ventured to indulge the hope, that the private distribution of my papers, in a collected form, among some of the Chefs-literati of France and England, might operate as a direct appeal to them to secure the publication of such additional materials before it should yet be too late. Even if disappointed in this hope, I shall not regret having joined you, my dear Fiske, in the attempt to record the personal history of the Chefs-heroes of other lands and of other times. The work is at least a pious one; and, as such, may be destined, perhaps, to an appropriate reward:—some foreign author, of a happier inspiration than mine, may one day arise to embalm the career of *our* Chefs-hero in a record as lasting, as that which has preserved forever the memory of Lionardo da Cutri and Paolo Boi of Syracuse. The distant adventure, upon which the youthful PAUL MORPHY has gone forth, is not less chivalrous, than those which won for that earlier IL PUTTINO the title of the *Chefs Knight-errant*:—may he too find his Alessandro Salvio; and thus, by a double title, shine to posterity not the least brilliant among the “LIGHTS AND SPLENDOURS OF THE GAME OF CHESS!”

I remain, MY DEAR FISKE,

Your friend and coadjutor,

GEO. ALLEN.

PHILADELPHIA, August 2d, 1858.



THE  
LIFE OF PHILIDOR.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS—MUSIC AND CHESS.

**I**N the early part of the seventeenth century, an Italian hautboy-player, from Sienna, by the name of *Filidori*, visited France, and produced a strong impression on the mind of Louis XIII. by his brilliant performance. Meanwhile a young subject of the King's, Michel Danican\* by name, had been studying the same instrument, in his native Dauphiné, with such success, that his skill went far beyond

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\* If the royalist general, Auguste Danican, was really (as Quérard affirms) of the same stock as Philidor, (even if not his son,) and if the new *Biographie Générale* be correct in saying that the General was of a decayed *noble* family, then either a *nom de fief* may have been dropt, or the actual name may have been spelt originally with the aristocratic *de*, viz., *D'Anican*.

anything until then known in France. He, too, came to Paris, a few years after the visit of the admired Italian; and when he had been admitted to play before the Court, his powerful instrument so stirred up in the soul of the King the recollection of his "sweetest of musicians," that he exclaimed—*"I have recovered my Filidori . . . I have found a second Philidor!"* The *sobriquet* of PHILIDOR, bestowed under circumstances so impressive, remained ever after inseparably attached to Michel Danican and his numerous successors. He himself was immediately made musician of the royal Chapel; his son, of the same name, (born in 1635,) was likewise hautboy-player, both in the Chapel and in the King's private band; and the race of Philidors, always multiplying and always clinging to the profession of their Dauphinais progenitor, (for one even beat the kettle-drum, for lack of talent to compass any higher attainment,)\* had, by and by, come to form a large element in the composition of the King's musical establishment.†

The third‡ Michel Danican, after having long

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\* "Le second était Tymbalier des Menus-plaisirs, n'ayant jamais pu parvenir à faire autre chose." *La Borde*.

† The facts given by *La Borde* and *Twiss* have here received some slight addition and interpretation from *Fétis*.

‡ *La Borde*, *Twiss*, *André Philidor*, and *Lardin* all agree in making Philidor's father to have been the *second*, and not the *third*, Michel—

filled the post of bassoon-player to Louis XIV., was permitted by Louis XV., in 1724, to retire on a pension. He fixed himself at Dreux, near Paris; and there FRANÇOIS-ANDRÉ DANICAN-PHILIDOR was born, on the 7th day of September, 1726.\* He was the first son by a third wife,—a woman (says her descendant) of a character singularly unsophisticated and simple. These qualities were reproduced in her son, in a proportion as remarkable as his share in the musical endowment of his race.† At the age of

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to have been the *son*, and not the *grandson*, of the Dauphinois hautboy-player. I believe them all to be in the wrong, and that Fétis (whom I follow) is in the right, partly because he appears to have consulted authentic documents, and partly for other reasons, which will presently appear.

\* Here Fétis gives the date of 1727, upon the authority of the valuable MSS. of Beffara, (*Biographie des Musiciens*, art. BEFFARA.) But M. Fétis appears to have seen the engraved portrait by Bartolozzi, and might have reflected, that the date attached to it was most probably given upon the authority of Philidor himself; and *we* have (what Fétis had not) not only the testimony of Twiss's Anecdotes, but also the legal certificate, (*acte de naissance*,) which Lardin professes to have had in his hands.

† The other biographers make her a second wife. I follow Lardin, who also (as a proof, perhaps, of her extreme simplicity) makes her at nineteen marry a husband of seventy-three. He gives our hero, at his birth, a sister of fifty-six years old; and will have him to be one of *eight* children, born between 1726 and 1730, when his father died—a period of only four years. Such an account, although coming from a descendant, is clearly not to be relied upon. According to Fétis, Philidor's father, Michel the third, was but fifty at the time of his last

fix, after the death of his father, André was admitted one of the Pages of the royal Chapel, at Versailles, and was thus put, for his musical education, under the veteran Campra, who was both *Maître de Chapelle* and also, by special patent, Teacher of the Pages. This admission was four years earlier than the age prescribed by the rules of the Chapel. The favour was, therefore, probably due to the influence of his numerous relations in the King's service, and to the support which their representations derived from evidences of his extraordinary precocity of musical talent, and of his docility of disposition. His boyish treble could be made available at once; and his literary studies\* were probably made to keep even pace with his exercises in Harmony and Counterpoint. The rigid old Campra was not at all the

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marriage. The other biographers, as we have seen, assume his father to have been the second Michel; and this, probably, is the secret of the bridegroom's advanced age.

\* Nothing is said, in my authorities, of Philidor's literary education; but I assume it to have been received under Campra's superintendence, because I understand, (from Grétry's *Mémoires* and other sources,) that the *Maitrises* (or residences of the *Maîtres de Musique*) of Cathedrals—and *à fortiori* of a Chapel Royal—were complete *Schools*, in which (as in the *Conservatories* of Italy) the pupils were lodged and strictly looked after, while they were carefully taught, along with their profession, whatever was necessarily associated with it. Some knowledge of *Latin*—the language of the Church services, which formed the usual theme of composition—appears, therefore, to have formed part of Philidor's education as a Page.



man to spoil a pupil by letting him grasp too soon at the reputation of being a musical prodigy. When, therefore, he allowed a Motett, with grand choruses—the composition of the boy-page, at the age of eleven years—to be performed in the royal Chapel, before the King himself, he gave the strongest possible testimony to the genius of Philidor, to his remarkable precocity, and to the thoroughness of his early attainments in musical science. The King encouraged the talent and rewarded the proficiency of the young Page—who seems to have won everybody's love and esteem from boyhood upwards—by kindly complimenting him and adding a present of five *louis*.\* The boy persevered in his studies, and wrote four Motetts more. At length, when he had completed his musical education, and when the age of fourteen had put an end to his pageship, he left the royal Chapel, and began to support himself in Paris by copying music, and by giving lessons to a few pupils. “This (says Twiss) was in 1740, when several *Motetts* of his composition were

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\* It is Fétis who informs us of the ten-year rule. He, therefore, will not admit that Philidor became a Page until 1737. Campra would not, he says, allow a boy to produce a Motett, when he had been studying only one year. This is no doubt true. But M. Fétis, instead of inferring, that Philidor might possibly have been admitted earlier than strict rule allowed, prefers to infer that the Motett was never written. André Philidor makes the Motett to have been written at twelve, and the King's present to have been ten *louis*.

performed at Paris at the *Concert Spirituel*, which were favourably received by the public as the productions of a child, who was already a Master and Teacher of Music."

But the professional activity of young Philidor began now to be interfered with by that fascinating pursuit, which he was never willing to acknowledge as anything for him but a secondary object at best, but to which he owes his permanent reputation. He had already learned Chefs while attached to the royal Chapel. The Kings of France, in those days, heard Mass with music every morning. The time during which eighty musicians waited, near the Sanctuary, for the King's approach and the beginning of Mass, must have hung heavily enough upon their hands; and some means of amusement were considerably allowed them. Cards were forbidden; but a long table, inlaid with six Chefs-boards, was provided—by the higher intellects (we must presume) of the musical corps. It was in such sacred proximities, from musicians waiting to accompany with voice and instrument the Holy Sacrifice, that Philidor learned Chefs.\* When he left the Chapel

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\* So much, and no more, say La Borde and Twiss. But André Philidor tells us the following story: "Philidor had often looked over the board with attention, but without ever playing himself, when, one morning, an old musician, who had come to his post rather early, grumbled a little at having nobody there to play his game of Chefs

he had the reputation of being the best player in the band; and he may have flattered himself, that this reputation was worth something, so long as he frequented only such of the numerous *Cafés*, wherein

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with. The boy, with modest hesitation, offered himself to do what he could. Such an offer, from a boy under ten, seemed ridiculous enough, but was merrily accepted. As the game went on, the laughter changed to wonder, and the wonder to wrath. The boy watched the darkening of the cloud, and accompanied the approach of checkmate with such a gradual sliding along towards the end of the bench, that when the storm burst he was able to reach the door too soon for the old limbs of the 'enraged musician.' The next day there was a scramble for the honour of playing with the 'marvellous boy.' I believe this story to be true, in spite of my fixed distrust of André's accuracy, because it is perfectly true to nature—true to the talent and curiosity of the gifted boy, and true to the position of deferential inferiority, in which lads of ten were kept, before *La jeune France* and *Young America* had come into fashion. It is, besides, precisely what occurred in the case of my venerable colleague, Professor Vethake, the Provost of our University. Mr. Vethake's father, while playing daily with a neighbor, had observed that his son, then only nine years old, seemed to look over the board with singular attention. He, therefore, said to him, one day, "Henry, you appear to take great interest in Chess—I think I must teach you the game." "But, Papa, I know the game already." "Why, who has taught you?" "Nobody; I have learnt it by seeing you play." "Sit down, then, and try a game with me." The boy took his place at the board to play his first game, and filial piety did not prevent him from beating his father soundly. His second game—or a very early one, at any rate—was played against a learned and skilful, but choleric, Dutch gentleman, who answered the boy's *Checkmate*, by knocking him down with the board. Of Professor Vethake's later career as a Chess-player I have said something in a Letter on *Chess in Philadelphia*, contributed to the *Book of the Congress*.

Chefs was played, as have left no name behind. But, by and by, his good fortune guided his steps to the immortal CAFÉ DE LA RÉGENCE, and seated him opposite to quite another player than had graced any of the fix sacred boards. M. de Kermur, Sire de Légal,\* at that time about forty years old, reigned supreme in that famous *Café*, and was undoubtedly a player of extraordinary strength; for Philidor alone was ever able to beat him, and that, too, not until he had developed his entire force by playing with Sir Abraham Janssen and the Syrian Stamma.† The “first player of the band” found it necessary to accept the Rook from M. de Légal; and it took full three years to work his way up, through the various degrees of odds, to the honour of confronting his master, on even terms, as a “first-rate.”‡

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\* This great player's name is variously written *Kermur*, *Sire de Legalle*, by Twiss, and *Kermur* and *Kermuy*, *Sire de Légal*, by others. In the List of Subscribers to Philidor's second edition it stands as in Twiss, but the spelling was, probably, in both cases Philidor's own. The account of Légal, given in the *London Magazine* for May, 1825, I take to be one of those fictions, under the garb of history, which have infested Chefs-literature still more vexatiously since the days of the wretched La Bourdonnais and Méry *Palamède*. Diderot calls him “le profond,” and adds, “on peut être homme d'esprit et grand joueur d'échecs, comme Légal.” (St. Amant's *Palamède*, t. ii. p. 88.)

† Fétis says that old Chefs-players at the *Café de la Régence* had repeated to him Philidor's own statement, that he did not attain his full strength until he had made his campaigns in Holland and in England.

‡ Philidor's communications to Twiss show that he received odds,

At this stage of his progress, the power of playing blindfold was discovered to exist in Philidor; and in the utter ignorance, on everybody's part, of what had been done in that way by the Paladins of the great Italian School, a hundred and fifty years before, the sensation excited by the young prodigy's feats was like that with which Paganini electrified the world, in the days of my "fair and shining youth."\* M. de Légal, it seems, had once tried, when young, to play a single game blindfold, but found himself so absolutely exhausted that he never repeated the experiment.† It now occurred to him, to ask Philidor, one day, "Whether he had ever tried to play from

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for three years, from his master, but they do not specify the gradation. That he received the Rook at first is an old *La Régence* tradition, and is probably true. La Bourdonnais used to take the Rook from Captain Harry Wilson, a player certainly far inferior to Légal. Deschappelles alone, if we are willing to be of the few or none that believe his famous story, rose to the rank of a first-rate, in twenty-four hours, without ever receiving odds of any kind.

\* [Or like that, (I may now add,) which has been made, in the society of London and Paris, during the last season, by the *eight* simultaneous blindfold games of PAUL MORPHY.]

† See Diderot's account of his conversation with Légal (then nearly eighty years old) in reference to Philidor's blindfold exhibitions in London, (St. Amant's *Palamède*, t. vii. p. 180.) I cite the words of Diderot's letter (April 10, 1782). "Au reste, j'en ai parlé à Monsieur de Légal; et voici sa réponse: 'Quand j'étais jeune je m'avisai de jouer une seule partie d'Echecs sans avoir les yeux sur le Damier; et à la fin de cette partie, je me trouvai la tête si fatiguée, que ce fut la première et la dernière fois de ma vie.'"

memory, without seeing the board? Philidor replied, that as he had calculated moves, and even whole games, at night in bed, he thought he could do it, and immediately played a game with the Abbé Chenard, which he won without seeing the board, and without hesitating upon any of the moves.—Philidor then finding he could readily play a single game, offered to play two games at the same time, which he did at a Coffee-house.”\* Such an exhi-

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\* Twiss (*Chefs*, vol. i. p. 151.)—Twiss merely gives the question by Légal: I have endeavoured to account for that question by connecting it with the statement made by Légal to Diderot. La Bourdonnais (or whoever was the author of the trifling *Biographie* in the first volume of his *Palamède*) states the matter thus: “There was a conversation going on, one day, (he says,) in the presence of M. de Légal and Philidor in reference to the great Italian players. Some were mentioned, who had played several games at a time, blindfold. M. de Légal appeared not only to doubt the reality of the alleged facts, but also to think the thing impossible. Philidor replied, that he could not agree with him; that he had often recalled difficult positions, in the night, etc.” (*Palamède*, t. i. p. 149.) There is both fiction and mischief in this. To disguise La Bourdonnais’s failure in the attempt to equal Philidor in blindfold playing, Philidor’s achievements were misrepresented and depreciated in La Bourdonnais and Méry’s *Palamède*. In this passage of the *Biographie*, the object was to make it appear, that Philidor knew, at the outset, that the great Italians, Paolo Boi and the Jesuit Saccheri, had been wont to play four blindfold games at once; that he was, therefore, neither unique nor original (as he was supposed to be) in the possession of this faculty; and that in playing *three* games at once, with the knowledge of a higher standard, he had undoubtedly reached the utmost limit of his powers. Méry even hints, in another place, (*Palamède*, t. ii. pp. 6–7,) that Philidor’s *real* limit

bition of fancy and memory was too novel and too portentous not to have been often repeated; it was a phenomenon for the psychologist no less than for the Chess-player; and the celebrity of the hero was extended far beyond the limits of the royal Chapel and of the *Café de la Régence*. At that period, Diderot and D'Alembert were meditating their too famous *Encyclopédie*, and when, a few years later, they began to issue volume after volume, they did not forget, although Philidor himself was living abroad at the time, to record the psychological phe-

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was the same as La Bourdonnais's, viz., *two* games at once—a piece of misrepresentation for which he was justly censured by M. St. Amant in his *Palamède*, (t. vii. pp. 179, 180.) Now, the alleged disbelief of Légal in the possibility of blindfold playing is inconsistent with his own statement to Diderot, that he had played one such game himself. The conversation, therefore, could never have taken place; it is “an invention of the enemy.” For my own part, I do not believe that Philidor ever attained the full development of his powers in either mode of playing. If he had really been aware, that Paolo Boi had played four simultaneous games, I think that Philidor, when in the fulness of youthful strength and health, could and would have done the same—just as we have seen Mr. Harrwitz play eight games after Paul Morphy. That Philidor and everybody else, at that day, were as ignorant of Chess-Literature as I have said, is also affirmed by the unfriendly authority of Vogt, (*Letters*, pp. 86–87.) The allusions of Philidor to Carrera, in the Preface to the first edition of his *Analyse*, are so expressed, as to prove, that he had not read what he strangely calls “this big book on *the origin and progress* of the game;” but had merely got from it—what did not absolutely require a knowledge of Italian—a proper name or two, with a *Game* or a *Position*.

nomenon, of which they had undoubtedly been witnesses.\*

It is obvious enough, that a light-hearted youth of from fourteen to eighteen could hardly be expected to fit all day studying Chefs with Légal, at the *Café de la Régence*—to be enjoying the sensation created by his blindfold games—and at the same time to keep regular hours with his music pupils. He neglected them, (as he admitted to Twiss), and they consequently took another master. It must not be inferred, however, that the neglect of his pupils amounted to an abandonment of his profession. He would never, probably, have been a punctual *Teacher*, at any rate—Chefs or no Chefs—and that because he had, with the genius, the temperament of a *Composer*:—he was always absolutely absorbed by his musical meditations, no less than, at another hour,

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\* I copy the language of the *Encyclopédie* from Twiss: "We had at Paris, a young man of eighteen, who played at the same time two games at Chefs, without seeing the boards, beating two antagonists, to either of whom he, though a first-rate player, could only give the advantage of a Knight, when seeing the board. We shall add to this account, a circumstance of which we were eye-witnesses: In the middle of one of his games, a false move was designedly made, which after a great number of moves he discovered, and placed the piece where it ought to have been at first. This young man is named Mr. Philidor, the son of a musician of repute; he himself is a great musician, and, perhaps, the best player of Polish Draughts there ever was, or ever will be. This is among the most extraordinary examples of strength of memory, and imagination."



by his game; and he was as little capable of taking note of time in one case as in the other. But if we accept his too honest confession, that Chefs spoiled him for a Teacher, in his youth, let us be fair enough to accept, with equal readiness of assent, his later declaration, that Music had at no time ceased to be his study.\* Such a declaration, after the event, may always, indeed, be, in the nature of things, a little suspicious; but that of Philidor happens to be supported—for this period, at least—by abundant proof. During his most assiduous practice of Chefs, with M. de Légal, Philidor regularly carried his annual tribute of a Motett to the royal Chapel, at Versailles; when the Chevalier de Jaucourt recorded his feats of blindfold playing, he said—not that he *had been*—but that he *was*, at the time, a “great musician;” and the first of that series of journeys, by which his reputation as a Chefs-player was spread over Europe, was undertaken solely in pursuance of a musical engagement. Nay, it is as a musician, doing professional work by contract, that Philidor figures in a transaction of this very period—a transaction, which exhibits him in close relations with the Philosopher of Geneva.

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\* In the advertisement, which Philidor inserted in the *Public Advertiser*, December 9th, 1753, he affirmed “that the Art of Music had been at all times his constant study and application, and Chefs only his diversion.”—Twiss, (*Chefs*, vol. ii. p. 216.)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau had come to Paris, in 1741, at the age of twenty-nine, with the expectation of gaining a name and fortune by means of a new scheme of musical notation. Failing in this, and reasoning, that he might secure the same ends by proving himself to be *first* in something else, just as well, he began daily to frequent the *Café de la Régence*, and to contend with its strongest players for the primacy of Chefs.\* He was beaten by them all; but he played resolutely on, with the assured conviction, that he should, one day, have his turn of beating them. He chose his adversaries wisely—for among them he names both Philidor and Légal. Before he had succeeded in beating either of them, he was called away to Venice, to take the place of private secretary to the French ambassador. On his return to Paris, in 1745, he returned also to his old opinion, that he was to achieve greatness by means of Music. To that end, he resumed a work, which he had laid aside, when entering on his Chefs-campaign—an Opera, namely, in three acts, entitled *Les Muses galantes*. This he wished to bring out, at first, privately, at the house of M. de la Popelinière, who, as *fermier-général*, was a genuine successor of the munificent *surintendant*, Nicolas Fouquet. Like Fouquet, La Popelinière was fond of

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\* The history of Rousseau's learning Chefs, a few years before, is given by him in an amusing paragraph of his *Confessions*, (liv. v.)

seeing himself furrounded by men of mind and mark, with little regard to birth, or standing, or even to character; and his mansion, at Passy, was made to contain every appliance for enabling the artists, who sought his patronage, to exhibit their talents under the most favourable auspices. He had his Theatre, with Marmontel for his dramatic poet. He had his Chapel, too; and his Organist and *Maître de Chapelle* was no other than Rameau.\*

It may be taken as a matter of course, that young Philidor, in his double character of precocious Musician and portentous Chefs-player, had been pressed into what was called La Popelinière's *ménagerie*, nor could any formal *procès-verbal*, duly authenticated, add strength to my assurance, that Philidor's Motetts took their turn in La Popelinière's Chapel, under the direction of his friend Rameau, and that Philidor's exhibition of blindfold playing had been repeated in La Popelinière's drawing-room, before a company, which embraced the Duc de Richelieu and Diderot, the painter La Tour, and the unrivalled mechanist, Vaucanson, side by side with every sort of foreign virtuoso and adventurer. Philidor was, at any rate, the common friend of many of the celebrities, that formed this assemblage; and when the composer of *Les Muses galantes* required the help of a thorough-

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\* What I say of M. de la Popelinière is derived from a very interesting article in the *Biographie Universelle*.

bred musician to lick his really genial production into a presentable shape, it was to young Philidor that he applied.

To what extent, and with what success, Philidor assisted Rousseau, is stated differently by different parties. There seems to have been a tradition in Philidor's family, that he executed his task with characteristic abnegation of self—that he so managed his symphonies and accompaniments, as to keep them entirely subordinate, while they gave relief to the melodies of the amateur composer.\* But, from Rousseau's own account, on the other hand, it would at least appear, that any efforts Philidor may have made to preserve the appearance of unity in the workmanship had been entirely unsuccessful. Rameau praised the Overture, indeed,—but not as being the production of Rousseau; and to the execution of the Opera itself he listened with various indications, now of impatience and now of suspicion, until at last he exclaimed—ill-naturedly enough—that part of what he had heard was the work of a consummate musician, and the rest that of the merest ignoramus in the art. Honest Jean-Jacques, therefore, is not at

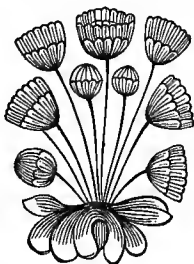
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\* Such is Lardin's statement in the *Palamède*, t. vii. p. 11, only that he speaks of Philidor's assistance as given to Rousseau for *Le Devin du Village*. But this was impossible: *Le Devin du Village* was composed and represented two years before Philidor's return from his nine years' residence abroad.

all disposed to overstate what had been contributed to the aforesaid "ignoramus" by the "consummate musician." He makes Philidor to have done but little; nor does he give the least hint, that that little was what drew forth the praise of Rameau.\* Without attempting to decide between the composer and his critic, it is enough for my present purpose to have shown, by an incident of some interest in itself, that down to the last of Philidor's early days in Paris, before his long residence abroad, he had never ceased to be a Musician, in the practice of his art.

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\* *Confessions*, liv. vii.





## CHAPTER II.

### PHILIDOR'S RESIDENCE ABROAD.

**T**OWARDS the close of the same year, 1745, in which Philidor had been lending his professional assistance to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he was induced to leave home, for a short musical tour, which was unexpectedly converted into a long residence abroad.\* At his age, and in his situation, the tour—even if its accidental result had been foreseen—could have presented itself to his mind

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\* If, as Twiss informs us, Philidor went to Holland in 1745, and—about a twelvemonth later—to England in 1747, he must have left home quite near the close of the year 1745. This inference is strengthened by the consideration, that his assistance to Rousseau appears to have been given immediately before the rehearsal at La Popelinière's, in the presence of the Duc de Richelieu. But Richelieu was an aide-de-camp of Louis XV. during the campaign of that summer, and could hardly have returned to Paris before the King, viz., on the 7th of September. The rehearsal was probably still later than that date; for Rousseau did not begin to work on his Opera until long after his return from Venice in the spring—the summer having been devoted to Thérèse Levasseur—and he was not a rapid worker.

only as a most attractive adventure. He was now barely nineteen, and—although mature in professional knowledge, and by no means frivolous or irregular in character and habits—was full of youthful spirits and enterprize. Hardly a year, moreover, had elapsed, since he had begun to attract attention, in Parisian circles, as a phenomenon; and the prospect of appearing in the same character, among the curious, the learned, and the noble, in foreign countries, would naturally be a most agreeable one. He had no pupils, and no official connexion with either Theatre or Chapel, to bind him to Paris. Nay, as a musician of genius, born to be a reformer of his country's music, he must have already begun to feel some vague longing, at least, to seek elsewhere for something that should better meet the ideal, now gradually shaping itself in his mind, than what he was daily familiar with, and to satiety, at home. Under these circumstances, even a less inviting opening than that which actually presented itself, might have been a sufficient inducement to young Philidor to "try his fortune," for a time, among strangers.\*

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\* I said before, (p. 13,) that Philidor went abroad solely in pursuance of a musical engagement. Such appears to have been the only reason given by him to Twiss. But La Borde must have heard from Philidor the other side of the case: he says, that Philidor's progress in Chêfs excited in him the desire of travelling, to "try his luck" (*pour*

A new phenomenon appeared, about that time, at Paris, in the person of a young harpsichord-player of thirteen, the daughter of an Italian by the name of LANZA. Such a *virtuosa* was so regular a subject for "Sultan" La Popelinière's *ménagerie*, that the imagination waits for no other evidence, to picture her as exhibiting her skill in the mansion at

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senier fortune). Gerber, author of the *Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*, (Leipzig, 1792,) although he knew nothing of Twiss, and based his article on La Borde, had the good sense, nevertheless, to interpret La Borde by his own knowledge of Philidor's occupations in Germany. He therefore says: "The progress, which he had, by this means, made in his art, and especially the skill, which he had at the same time acquired in Chess, excited in him the desire to try his fortune in foreign lands." (2. Theil, 127.) Undoubtedly, a musical engagement furnished Philidor the *occasion* for going abroad: he had other *motives*, however, besides the desire of professional improvement, for being glad that such an occasion should have presented itself; but I do by no means recognise, as even *one* of those motives—what M. Fétis makes the *only* one—the wish or the necessity of *absconding* to get rid of debts. To believe, that a boy of nineteen could have been in such a situation, we must have some reasonable show of evidence. But M. Fétis's sole authority was "a celebrated Chess-player," one M. Dunant, who did not know enough of Philidor to know where he was, from 1745 to 1754. And yet this idle story is repeated—with the gratuitous improvement, that creditors were the standing torment of his life (*la grande plaie de sa vie*)—by a very clever author of the day, who—while meaning well by Philidor—has been so far from going behind his careless authorities, as to follow them in relating, that Philidor, like Handel, became blind—such being the French version of "playing without sight of board and men." (P. Scudo, *Critique et Littérature Musicales*, deuxième série, pp. 472-3.)



Paffy, with the bright-eyed François-André, among the rest, for an admiring listener. At all events, Philidor became acquainted with the father. Signor Lanza, it appears—whether just arrived from England, or not—had made an arrangement with the celebrated violinist, Geminiani, who was then residing at London, to meet him in Holland, for the purpose of giving twelve subscription-concerts, in which the young harpsichord-wonder was to perform. He now engaged Philidor to be of the party and of the adventure. As Philidor never played on any instrument—the kettle-drum of his ancestor being as much beyond his skill as the bassoon of his father—his part in the concerts must have been one, in which either his science was called into requisition, or such vocal powers as his pageship had left him. At the moment of setting out on the journey, the daughter was indisposed. She was, therefore, left behind, with her mother, at Paris, until she should be able to travel; while the father proceeded to Holland, in company with Philidor, to keep his appointment with Geminiani. At Rotterdam, where the party (it would seem) was to rendezvous, there arrived—not the daughter of Signor Lanza—but the news of her death. The whole concert-scheme, with all its prospects of emolument, was thus suddenly destroyed by the hand of fate; and our sanguine adventurer, whose resources had been entirely pro-

spective, now found himself penniless and a stranger in a foreign city.

The destitution and involuntary exile, which had so suddenly and violently come on "as an armed man," must certainly, at first, have given a severe shock to the spirits of the young musician, whose boyhood and youth, up to that day, had basked in the sunshine of affection and of the admiration due to his double inheritance of genius. But Philidor was too amiably attractive to be left long without friends anywhere, and too cheerful by organization ever to despair. He had, undoubtedly, already learned, while awaiting the arrival of the poor *Signorina*, that if Rotterdam could boast of no classic *Caf  de la R gence*, with its order of Chefs-magnates, it could point to plenty of homely coffee-houses, where pairs of heavy Dutchmen sat pondering over a larger board, deliberately puzzling their brains with the intricacies of Polish Draughts. Philidor's remarkable skill in this difficult and scientific game may have been rated too high in the *Encyclop die*, it contributed little to his celebrity, and he himself took no great pride in it; but it now did him yeoman's service.\* He became at once a Mas-

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\* "Philidor's skill in Polish Draughts is rather overrated by the writers of this article, [in the *Encyclop die*,] as we know that, although a first-rate, he was not equal to M. Le Blonde, and several other great players of that day. In a voluminous collection of critical ends of games at Polish Draughts, (published by Dufour, Paris, 1808,) I find

ter among the Dutch Draught-players; and upon what he earned in this capacity, whether in the shape of fees or of stakes, he lived for a time—and, apparently, in no distress—first, at Rotterdam, and afterwards at Amsterdam.\*

But the political capital of the country, now that a winter of cabinet-councils and diplomatic conferences had succeeded to an eventful campaign, presented greater attractions to Philidor, than the coffee-houses of the great commercial cities. He proceeded, therefore, to the Hague; and there he remained during the greater part of his residence in Holland. It was not, however, the cunning men of peace alone, that he found there. The armies had gone into winter-quarters; and many of the officers were now, of course, at liberty to exchange

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fix ingenious positions of Philidor's composition." (Walker's *Biographical Sketch*, p. xiv. note.) A correspondent of the *La Bourdonnais Palamède* (tome iv. p. 120) speaks, on the other hand, of Philidor as "le premier joueur de Dames connu." St. Amant (*Palamède*, tome vii. p. 15, note) probably means to go no farther than Walker: "Il était également aux Dames d'une force tout-à-fait supérieure, mais n'y attachait pas le même amour-propre qu'aux Échecs."

\* The following memorandum of Twiss (vol. i. p. 3) points to a later residence of Philidor's at Rotterdam: "Mr. Philidor informed me that he saw, in 1747, at Rotterdam, in the possession of a coffee-house keeper, a set of Chefs-men, which were made for Prince Eugene. They were three inches in height, of solid silver, chased; not different in colour, but sufficiently distinguished, by one side representing an European, and the other an Asiatic, army."

the monotony of mere camp-duty for the gay life of a city thronged with foreign visitors. Among them some were found as ready to show their prowess in mimic as in real war ; and at the gentle Frenchman's Chefs-board there doubtless came to fit, in peaceful meditation, many a survivor of that array of warriors, who, on the 11th of May, before, had struggled, with indomitable hardihood, in sublime advance and still sublimer retreat, to "keep front and rear together," in the memorable column of Fontenoy.\* The chivalrous Sir John Ligonier, who had acted as the royal Duke's military tutor on that bloody day, had been recalled to England, to head Gardiner's dragoons—so long as they would face the Highland host—at Falkirk ; but he had left behind him his relative, Colonel la Deves ; and to him Philidor gave the Knight in many a Chefs-encounter. The Prince of Waldeck, who had seen his Dutch division behave so ill at Fontenoy, had met with still another disaster at Rocoux. He, too, was at the Hague, ready to receive a Piece from the youthful

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\* Should military histories fail to preserve the memory of this battle, it will still be remembered, for it has been lightened upon by the genius of Scott. Who can read without a thrill Edie Ochiltree's question : " Francie Magraw, do ye no remember Fontenoy, and 'Keep front and rear thegither?' " I wish Mr. Davis's Ballad (*Hayes's Ballads of Ireland*, vol. i. p. 213) may be as successful in securing their just share of credit to the fiery soldiers of the IRISH BRIGADE, for their part in breaking and forcing back the English column.

master. The princely pupil not only rewarded him nobly for his instructions, but also bore away a kind remembrance of him for aftertime.

In 1747, and quite probably in consequence of the agreeable relations formed with the British officers at the Hague, Philidor made the first of those visits to England, which he was destined so often afterwards to repeat. The English liked Philidor; and as they are not hasty likers, their taking to him so kindly and always continuing to award him their respect and their patronage, is a certain proof of the rare amiability and substantial good character of the man. Here "Sir Abraham Janssen, (says Twiss,) introduced him to all the celebrated players of the time.\* Sir Abraham was not only the best Chess-player in England, but likewise the best player he ever met with, after his Master, M. de Légal, as the Baronet was able to win one game in four with

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\* "The best players who were living in England, during this century, were Mr. Cunningham, Lord Sunderland, Lord Godolphin, Mr. Cargyll, Sir Abraham Janssen, P. Stamma, Dr. Black, Dr. Cowper, and Mr. Salvador. Most of these gentlemen were to be met at Old Slaughter's Coffee-house, St. Martin's Lane, in a private room." (*Chefs*, vol. i. pp. 162-3.) Only the five last are mentioned in any connexion with Philidor. Cunningham, the Scholar and Jurist, was already dead in 1730; and Cunningham, the Historian, although alive in 1735, was then extremely old. The puzzling question, which of these *Doppelgänger* (as De Quincey calls them) is the Chess-player's Cunningham, appears to have been set at rest, for the first time, by Dr. Irving, in his *Lives of Scottish Writers*, (vol. ii. pp. 220-38.)

him *even*: and M. de Légal, with whom Sir Abraham afterwards played in Paris, was of the same opinion with regard to his skill.”\*

One of the celebrated players, then in England, was Philip Stamma of Aleppo, who was employed by the Government as a translator of despatches in the Oriental languages.† Although he had published the first edition of his famous situations at Paris, it is not likely that he and Philidor had ever met there; for in 1737, when Stamma printed his book, Philidor was in the royal Chapel, with several years of his apprenticeship still before him. A match was now arranged between them, to consist of ten games, Philidor giving the move, allowing a drawn game to be a lost one, and betting five to four on each game. The French champion lost only two games, one of which was drawn.‡ There

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\* Count Brühl, however, makes Philidor able to give Sir Abraham slight odds: “By all accounts, the best player this country (England) has produced, was the late Sir Abraham Janssen, who used to play on even terms with Philidor, and to whom he could not give more than the Pawn for the move—an advantage which amounts to little more than the first move.” Letter to Daines Barrington, (*Archæologia*, vol. ix. p. 14.)

† Daines Barrington, (*Archæologia*, vol. ix. and in *Chefs Player's Chronicle*, vol. i. p. 110.)

‡ I have a warm fellow-feeling with an editor's or a biographer's partiality for his hero; but I must enter my respectful protest against Herr von Oppen's view of Philidor's contest with Stamma as a contest between *Science* and *Genius*—an encounter, in which *Genius*—

is no positive statement that they played any other than these match-games together; but it is in the highest degree probable that they did; for it would be hard to believe, that Stamma was not a frequenter, with Philidor, of the Club of gentlemen at Slaughter's Coffee-house; it is expressly stated by Twiss, that Stamma was one of those to whom Philidor became able to give the Knight in a certain monstrous kind of Chess, which a Duke of Rutland had been perverse enough to invent, and Sir Abraham Janssen foolish enough to delight in playing;\*

although she naturally gets the worst of it—secures more of admiration, for the irregular brilliancy of the fight she makes, than her dull adversary, for winning by mere stolid adherence to rule and precept. Stamma's style—if (as we know) his favourite game was the dry *Queen's Gambit*—was anything but what Herr von Oppen conceives it to have been. Nay, there is every reason to believe, that Stamma had (partially, at least) formed his style of play in the same school as his adversary—unless we can suppose the Syrian to have lived long enough in Paris to have published a Chess-book there, without frequenting the *Café de la Régence* and trying his strength with Philidor's master, M. de Légal.—(L. Bledow und O. v. Oppen, *Stamma's Hundert Endspiele*, p. 2.)

\* “At this game, the board is fourteen squares in breadth, and ten in height, which makes one hundred and forty houses; fourteen pieces and fourteen pawns on a side; the pawns might move either one, two, or three squares, the first time. The pieces were, the *King*, the *Queen*, then two *Bishops*, two *Knights*, a *Crowned Castle*, uniting the move of the King and Castle, and a common *Castle*. On the other side of the King, was a *Concubine*, whose move was that of the Castle and the Knight united, two *Bishops*, a single *Knight*, a *Crowned Castle* and a common one. The best players at this game, after Sir Abraham, were

and Philidor is reported to have said, that his Chefs-talent had been developed by playing with Stamma—a statement which could hardly have been applied to playing a single match of ten games.\*

In 1748, Philidor returned to Holland, where he composed his *Treatise on Chefs*. So Twiss tells us, briefly enough. There was much to draw him in that direction. A brilliant campaign had opened, in which the Duke of Cumberland, flushed with his triumph over the Young Chevalier, was struggling in vain to hold his own against his brother Chefs-player,† the victor of Fontenoy. But, whe-

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Stamma, Dr. Cowper, and Mr. Salvador. Philidor, in less than two months, was able to give a Knight to each of these gentlemen at this game.”—Twiss, (*Chefs*, vol. i. pp. 155-6.)

\* Fétis’s words are: “lui-même a souvent dit à d’anciens joueurs du *Café de la Régence* que j’ai connus, que son talent aux échecs s’était développé en Hollande, en jouant avec Stamma et d’autres joueurs de première force.” The old Chefs-players were probably right in all but the *place*: they spoke under the impression, which they communicated to Fétis also, that Philidor was in no other country but Holland, during the whole of his residence abroad. Before the year 1745, however, when Philidor left home, Stamma had become a fixed resident of London, where he published, that very year, the last and complete edition of his book, under the title of *The Noble Game of Chefs*. Nay, I do not believe that Stamma *ever* lived in Holland at all: at any rate, the reprint of the *Essai* at the Hague, in 1741, is rather evidence that he did not, than that he did; for that reprint indicates, by its *bookseller’s* advertisement, that the *author* had nothing to do with it; and Stamma indirectly, but pointedly, ignores it, in the Preface to the edition of London, 1745.

† A proof of Marshal Saxe’s interest in Chefs is given by the



ther losing or gaining ground, the Duke was still attended by the friendly officers, who had crowded around the young Frenchman's board two years before at the Hague. Aix-la-Chapelle, too, presented its attractions. The startling check, which the Comte de Saxe had given at Maëstricht, had made the British more than willing to bring the war to a close elsewhere than on the field of battle; and envoys plenipotentiary, with their usual attachés and following, were disturbing the repose of Charlemagne with their eager discussions. Here was an opportunity, not to be lost, of claiming for Chéfs its proper rank among the great interests of civilized man. Whether Lord Sandwich, the English plenipotentiary, had known Philidor in London, or not, is not mentioned; but at Aix-la-Chapelle he proved himself a kind and useful friend. He put down his

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"*deux Mats*" published in La Bourdonnais's *Palamède*, (tome ii. pp. 41-43,) and elsewhere. The proof, however, is not quite so decisive as could be wished; for it may be doubted whether Marshal Saxe was the composer of either of the "*deux Mats*" in question. Both of them belong to the class, known among the Germans as *Spießruthenspiele*, i. e. *Running-the-gauntlet Problems*, all of which are imitations of the ingenious original of an Italian ecclesiastic, (Don Pietro Petronio,) given by Salvio, (ed. 1732, p. 64.) One of them was certainly composed by Professor Wildt of Cassel, (See Koch's *Codex*, vol. ii. p. 296,) more than half a century after the Marshal's death; and of the other, Montigny, (who appears to have been the first to publish it,) merely says, (*Stratagèmes*, Première Partie, p. 77,) *Ce coup est attribué au Maréchal de Saxe.*

name for ten copies of the *Analyse*; and the list glitters with the insignia of other diplomatic agents, who followed the grand Englishman's example at a respectful distance. He also judiciously advised Philidor to proceed to the Duke of Cumberland's headquarters at Eyndhoven, between unlucky Maastricht and Bois-le-Duc. The Duke played with him, and—for Chefs-players at least—wiped out from his escutcheon all the stains of his Culloden campaign, by subscribing himself for fifty copies of Philidor's book, and by procuring a great number of other subscribers—the gallant British officers, (it may be presumed,) whose names constitute so large a proportion of the hundred and twenty-seven, that figure on the List.

Philidor returned to England to carry his work through the press. It was published at London, in 1749, under the title of *L'ANALYSE du Jeu des Echecs*.\* Being entirely incompetent myself to dis-

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\* La Borde had mentioned, that Philidor published his *Analyse* at London, in 1749. M. Fétis, therefore, flatly denies the very existence of such an edition, with a resoluteness of skepticism, that is truly delightful: "Outre qu'il y a bien peu de vraisemblance qu'il y ait eu dans la tête d'un jeune homme de vingt-deux ans assez d'expérience de toutes les finesse, de toutes les variétés de ce jeu, pour arriver à la clarté, à la simplicité des principes exposés dans ce livre, mes recherches dans les bibliographies générales, et dans les catalogues, n'ont pu me faire découvrir cette édition de 1749." A book published in so large an edition, as even the four hundred and thirty-three copies sub-

cuss the value of the *Analyse* as a work of Chess-science, I am singularly fortunate in being able to refer the reader to the Essay on PHILIDOR as *Chess-author and Chess-player*, which the great German Master, Herr VON HEYDEBRAND UND DER LASA, has done me the honour to append to my little Biography. It suffices for me to say here, that the immediate success of the book must have more than fulfilled the most sanguine anticipations of its author. It was speedily translated into English and German, and more than once reprinted in the original French, before Philidor had returned to his native country. More fortunate than most didactic compositions, it has still retained a position of peculiar honour, although now, so far from standing, as at first, alone, it has fellows that are worthy to be its peers. Even the *Theory of the Analyse*—that THE PAWNS ARE THE SOUL OF CHESS—one-sided as it may appear—is still resolutely maintained by one, whose name is everywhere held in esteem,—the great Russian author, Major JÆNISCH, who makes the very title of his own palmary work (*Nouvelle Analyse*)

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scribed for would make, could by no possibility become, within a hundred years, such a book as a De Bure would honour with his majuscular RARE, unless the hands of Chess-players were as destructive as those of the *bonnêtes artisans* of Brunet, which have so nearly annihilated the Elzevir *Pâtissier Français*. The *Analyse* of London, 1749, is readily secured by every collector: I have myself had three copies.

pay homage to the work of Philidor. The homage of many others may, indeed, be unintelligent and unreasonable, just as the carping of some envious rival authors may have been uncandid and unjust; but I think it may be safely said, that the *Analyse* of Philidor is one of those "barks launched on the Ocean of Time," that are doomed never to be engulfed in its waves. It is a work of GENIUS. Originality looks out from every page; an energetic vitality speaks out from every line. Hence the charm, which it still has, even for those who do not wholly accept its theory.

Of this second residence of Philidor's in England it is further recorded by Twiss, that he frequented the house of the French Ambassador, the Duc de Mirepoix, who was an expert Chefs-player, and gave a weekly Chefs-dinner; and that in 1751, while he was at Windsor, with the Duke of Cumberland, he introduced Dr. Black, a clergyman, who kept a school at Chiswick, as a first-rate Chefs-player, to the Duc de Mirepoix, at his country-house at Hammer-smith. The Doctor turned this talent to such advantage, that the Duke solicited, and obtained for him, the year following, a living of two hundred pounds per annum, which was in the gift of the then King, George II.

"Philidor remained another year in England, and learning that the King of Prussia was fond of Chefs,

he set off for Berlin in 1751. The King saw him play several times at Potsdam, but did not play with him himself. There was a Marquis de Varennes and a certain Jew, who played *even* with the King, and to each of these Philidor gave a Knight, and beat them." Such is Twiss's dry and meagre account of Philidor's visit to the capital of the Great Frederic. The little that can be added from other sources is not without interest. The celebrated mathematician, Euler—whom we may reckon among celebrated Chefs-authors, also, for his algebraic Memoir on the Knight's Tour—was, at that time, living in Berlin. Fortunately, the merest fragments that fall from such great arithmeticians are sacred; and thus a contemporary letter of Euler's (bearing date July 3d, 1751) has been preserved,\* from which we learn, that he too shared in the interest, which was excited by the presence of Philidor. Euler, it seems, was a Chefs-player, as well as Chefs-author, and would gladly have encountered the famous stranger over the board, but he could find no opportunity. His explanation of the cause shows us, that

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\* In the *Correspondance Mathématique et Physique de célèbres Géomètres du XVIII<sup>ème</sup> Siècle*, Part First, p. 545. The letter was ferreted out by the Chefs-playing astronomer, Schumacher of Altona, and communicated by him to the Berlin *Schachzeitung* for 1848, (p. 545.) The date of Euler's letter shows that Twiss should have made 1750, and not 1751, the year of Philidor's leaving England for Berlin.

Philidor's relations were immediately with the Court : he could not be found at Berlin, because he spent the most of his time at Potsdam, the favourite residence of the King.\* The gossiping geometer does not forget to relate, that Philidor, *although* said to be still a very young man, had selected a travelling companion of such a character, that he was compelled to hasten his departure, to escape the vexatious rivalry of certain military men.†

The accurate Gerber, on the other hand, had gathered—after the lapse of thirty years—such memorials of Philidor's residence at Berlin, as proved

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\* Thirty-two years later, Philidor presented a copy of his *Carmen Seculare* to the Prince Royal of Prussia, afterwards King Frederic William II. The Prince's very courteous and amiable note of thanks confirms Twiss's and Euler's statement of Philidor's relations with persons about the Court : "Je me rappelle toujours avec plaisir, Monsieur, quoique j'étais fort jeune alors, [seven years old,] de vous avoir vu à Berlin jouer aux Echecs avec mon instituteur" [probably M. Beguelin.]

† Left the text should not be thought clear enough, I here present the curious reader with Euler's own German : "Er soll noch ein sehr junger Mann sein, führte aber eine Maitresse mit sich, wegen welcher er mit einigen Officieren in Potsdam Verdrießlichkeiten bekommen, welche ihn genöthiget unvermuthet wegzureisen." I do not believe, that Philidor "brought with him" to the Court of Frederic the Great, or took with him to the Palace of the Prince of Waldeck, any person of the above French-German designation. What remains of the scandal, after performing this subtraction, is likely enough (I am sorry to say) to have been true. A lively young French musician could not be expected to be far in advance of his age in such matters.

that his Chefs-doings there had been far more brilliant than had come to the knowledge of Euler. No other authority preserves the fact, that Philidor exhibited his feats of blindfold playing during his residence abroad. Nay, it appears generally to have been believed, that the attempt at playing more than two such games at once was first made by him at London, so late as 1783. But from Gerber we learn, that in 1751 Philidor played three simultaneous blindfold games, at Berlin, against three skilful players, and won them all.\* The same careful biographer adds the important information, that Philidor by no means spent his time at Berlin as a mere idle Chefs-player. In England (he says) Philidor had gained large sums of money by the subscription for his Chefs-book; but in Germany he became a gainer in another way,—in knowledge of Music and of Musical Composition. He not only

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\* From this well-authenticated instance, I have felt authorized to infer, (*ante*, p. 19,) that it entered into Philidor's plans, on leaving home, to win admiration—if not to gain emolument—by the exhibition of his gift of blindfold playing. I have no doubt, that he did actually make such exhibitions, not at Berlin alone, but also at the Hague, Aix-la-Chapelle, Eyndhoven, and wherever he found any royal and princely personages, or any illustrious assemblage, to invite him. The presents, which he would receive on such occasions, would do more to keep him above want, than his earnings from the Chefs or Draught board. The only wonder is, that he should have said nothing of the matter to Twiss.

endeavoured to improve his taste by listening to the execution of *chefs-d'œuvres* in Music, but also (according to some of Gerber's authorities) had actually studied under a great Master of the art, then residing at Berlin.

Philidor left the Prussian capital before the middle of the following year, and reaped the fruit of his agreeable relations with the Prince of Waldeck in 1746, by now enjoying his hospitality for eight months at Arolsen. After spending three weeks at the Court of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, he finally returned to England, where he remained until near the close of the year 1754.

Of this third residence in England the only record that remains relates to Philidor's musical doings. It appears, that not long after his arrival in England he appeared before the public with some "Latin [Church] Music," and that he had experienced how much his more brilliant Chefs-reputation might injure him as a musician: it was not conceived, apparently, that he could be a great Chefs-player and an original composer at the same time; a calumny (he complains) was, therefore, spread about town, that he was not the author of the music he had given. To prove his capacity for original composition, he now undertook to set to music Congreve's Ode for St. Cecilia's Day; for it would be impossible, he declared, for any man living to find out old music that



could really agree with new words.\* The Ode was performed at the Haymarket Theatre on the 31st of January, 1754. It was commended (according to Twiss) by the great HANDEL. La Borde says, (with more particularity,) that Handel pronounced the Choruses to be well composed, but that the style of the Airs still left room for improvement. As Handel had become blind in 1751, and rarely went out, except to church, he could have been induced only by high regard for Philidor to have put himself in the way of pronouncing this frank and friendly opinion.† Under the encouragement of

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\* Twiss, (*Chefs*, vol. ii. pp. 215-17,) gives Philidor's advertisement in the *Public Advertiser*, dated December 9th, 1753. Philidor, ignorant, of course, of English Literature, had told Twiss in 1787, as he had told La Borde in 1780, that the poetry, which he had set to music, was *Dryden's* famous Ode. When Twiss showed him this advertisement he recognized his mistake.

† Not one word of all this does M. Fétis believe. He does not believe, that any musician would have been presumptuous enough to put new music to Dryden's Ode after Handel. (Twiss's lucky discovery answers this objection.) He does not believe, that Handel either commended the Choruses or found fault with the Airs, because Handel no longer left his house. (But Hawkins used to see him in church—and behaving himself very devoutly, too—during this very period.) He does not even believe, that Philidor was in London at all during his absence from France. The publication of the *Analyse* at London does not weigh with him to the contrary, for that publication is, to him, a pleasant fiction and no more. Where then *was* our Philidor, since he was neither in London, nor Berlin, nor in any place, that was to be swallowed on the authority of the wretched La Borde? Fortunately,

a judgment so decisive, Philidor appears to have pursued his professional labours with a new ardour, that prompted him to return once more to his native country, where, to such reputation as he had gained abroad, he might add the glory of a reformer.

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M. Fétis can tell us with reasonable certainty: for one M. Dunant, the celebrated Chess-player before mentioned, who had often played with Philidor, told M. Fétis, in 1805, that the poor young musician had fairly absconded, in 1745, in order to give the slip to his creditors, and that he lay perdu among the Dutch for nine full years, not once escaping from that network of dykes and canals, until he showed himself in Paris, in 1754.





## CHAPTER III.

### PHILIDOR AND THE OPÉRA-COMIQUE.

**P**HILIDOR returned to Paris in November, 1754, after an absence of nine years. He had left home a youth of nineteen, and returned to it a man of twenty-eight. No doubt he had spent a great deal of time, during these nine years, in playing *Chefs*; but, during the two last years he must have been industrious as a musician; and that he had constantly kept his profession seriously in view is proved by his own statement to La Borde, that his taste had been formed, during his travels, by hearing the great Italian masters,—by Gerber's account of his studies in Germany,—and, above all, by the fact, that the style of the music, which he produced on his return, gave proof both of entire change and solid improvement. He found the post, which Campra had vacated by death ten years before, again vacant; and, in order to make good his own application for it, he produced, in the royal Chapel,

two new Motetts—one of them his *Lauda Jerusalem*; but they were considered (says La Borde) to be “too Italian;” and the Queen, who took the French side in the great musical controversy of the day, would not suffer the ghost of dear old Campra to be disturbed by a successor so revolutionary. Under these circumstances, Philidor, of course, lost the chance of improving the music of the royal Chapel and the Chêfs-playing of the Pages; but he had won the approbation of such as could venture to think differently from the Court,\* and, under their encouragement, he abandoned, for the present, the hopeless attempt of intruding melodious Motetts and Anthems upon the drowsy repertory of French Chapels and Cathedrals, and entered upon a new career of musical activity, which he ever after pursued, with that cheerful industry, which marks the healthy and genial mind.†

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\* It is with reference (as I understand) to the Church-music, which Philidor produced at this period, that Gerber cites the following passage from a letter of Mereaux to the Abbé Gerbert: “Philidor, one of our good composers of Church-music at Paris, constructs his works in the true German and Italian style, and does not, after the modern fashion, sacrifice either Counterpoint or Fugue, or purity of Harmony, to the mere beauty of melody.”

† The “Amateurs of the Science,” who (according to Twiss) complimented Philidor on his improved style of Church-music, and who encouraged him to enter upon another career, were (no doubt) the leaders of the second of the two then belligerent parties, described by Rousseau: “L’un, plus puissant, plus nombreux, composé des grands,

The fact was, that the rebuff, which he had received at Versailles, had only helped him to discover his real vocation. He had every capacity, it is true, for the composition of Church-music, but, at this moment, there was other work to be done, and he had been in training—quite unconsciously to himself—as one of the principal agents for doing it. French dramatic music had hitherto been little better than an engrafting of declamation upon the choral harmony of the Church, or—where less grave entertainment was called for—a mixture of farce and

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des riches, et des femmes, soutenait la musique française; l'autre, plus vif, plus fier, plus enthousiaste, était composé des vrais connaisseurs, des gens à talents, des hommes de génie." (*Confessions*, liv. viii.) One of these leaders, Diderot, was probably interested in Philidor from the early days of the *Café de la Régence* and the receptions of La Popelinière; the other, Grimm, the friend of Diderot, was, at that time, a new-comer in Paris. André Philidor says, that his father devoted himself to the music of the stage by the advice of Rameau. Nothing could be more likely. We have already seen the two brought into relations with each other—and, probably, not for the first time—in connexion with *Les Muses galantes* of Rousseau:—in fact, one cannot but suspect, that Rameau aimed a sly compliment at his young friend, when he commended the Overture. Further proof of friendly relations, that might have given occasion for such advice, may be found in the fact, that when Rameau died, in 1767, at the age of eighty-four years, and "the *Royal Academy of Music*, who all regarded themselves as his children, performed a solemn service in the Church of the Oratory, at his funeral, *Mr. Philidor* had a Mass performed at the Church of the Carmelites, in honour of a man, whose talents he so much admired." Burney, (*History of Music*, vol. iv. p. 615.)

comic song. Native agencies were only slowly working out some change, when, in 1752, a company of Italian burletta-fingers—called by the French (*tout court*) *Les Bouffons*—came to Paris, and produced a lively sensation by their melodious and dramatic style. Jean-Jacques Rousseau took advantage of this sensation to make a violent onset upon what the Parisians still clung to, in his celebrated *Letter on French Music*,\* by which he immediately drew upon himself and his second, Grimm, the attacks of a legion of exasperated pamphleteers. Nothing could have been more to his mind, than the present effect and the final result of his sudden assault. He had, indeed, confirmed the obstinacy of the old conservative party, but he had called forth, and given a voice to, the latent demand in the young French mind for a music that should speak, with stronger

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\* All musical writers, from the grave Burney down to Castil-Blaze, appear to agree, that Rousseau said no more than the truth, in calling French music "a clumsy psalmody," whether they adopt, or not, his ingenious comparison of its *Airs* to "a galloping cow, or a fat goose attempting to fly." (*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, 2 Partie, Lettre xxiii.) The style of singing was worthy of the music. "No *voce di petto*, no true *portamento*," says Burney; no *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, no departure from the monotony, which they "hugged," but one steady strain of the voice. Hence, when Traetta wished to give a certain expression to the note, through which *Sofonisba* was to utter her feelings, "dans une occasion suprême," he could think of nothing better than to write over the note, for the singer's instruction, *Un urlo francese* (a French scream.)—Castil-Blaze, (*L'Opéra Italien*, p. 243.)

sympathy, to its love of mirth well paired with melody, and of natural dramatic action united with skilful composition. Both of these parties triumphed, each in its own way. The French party had the Court on their side, and therefore found no difficulty, of course, in getting the poor Italians driven out of France, in 1754, by a *de par le Roi*. The reformers had already triumphed, when they awoke so loud an echo to their demand for a music more truly expressive and dramatic. It was necessary, however, that the fates should second their theoretic victory by furnishing them with what theory cannot produce,—the genius of the artist, to create what should meet those aspirations, which the skill of the disputants had only been competent to call forth, but not to satisfy. Imperfect attempts were making to meet the existing demand, and they were received with good-will; but they were worthy only to be preludes to something that should possess the breath of true poetic life.

Such was the state of things, when Philidor—whose return to France most significantly bore date the very year of the *Bouffon-hegira*—was advised, perhaps, by others, and certainly led by the instincts of his own genius, to abandon his visions of piling up heaps of *Glorias* and *Credos* in the library of chapels, royal or princely, and to betake himself to the music of the stage. His first step, so far as we know,

was (in 1757) to approach the director of the grave and respectable Opera of the old school, with a lyric drama modestly limited to one act. But it would not do. The conservative M. Rébel knew his duty better—"he would have no *tunes* on his stage."\* Then it was that Philidor quietly turned his back on these ancient respectabilities, and entered one of those homelier and more popular establishments, which had gradually grown up, from some Bartlemy-Fair booth (like that which Goethe has immortalized in the Prelude to his *Faust*) into what was now more ambitiously called the *Opéra-Comique*. Here it was—at the *Foire S. Laurent*—that those imperfect attempts were making to realize the ideal, with which Rousseau and the Italian *Bouffons* had possessed the minds of such as were farthest removed from the Court. A few unknown airs, composed in 1758 for some unheard of *Pèlerins de la Mecque*,† revealed to

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\* "En 1757, il essaya de composer un acte d'opéra; mais Rébel refusa de le donner, en lui disant qu'on ne voulait point introduire d'airs dans les scènes." (*La Borde*.) M. Fétis copies these words, and then—with his customary respect for La Borde—adds "on ne fait ce que signifie cette phrase." To me the signification appears perfectly clear.

† "En 1758, ayant fait quelques airs pour les *Pèlerins de la Mecque*," says La Borde. This cannot be, argues M. Fétis: "No piece of that name was played in 1758, either at the *Opéra-Comique* or at any other theatre in Paris." But La Borde's date of 1758 refers rather to Corbi's offer than to the composition which induced the offer. Again: La



the Director, Corbi—who happened not to have M. Rébel's aversion to tunes—the fact, that a rich mine of genius was offered to his hand, which he had only to work, to enrich the poor soil of his country's music. Philidor was immediately urged to undertake a regular comic opera. The result was the production (in 1759) of *Blaise le Savetier*, which—although less perfect than some of his subsequent works—not only achieved a decided and permanent success for the composer, but also set the longed-for reform of dramatic music fairly afloat.\* Our hero

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Borde's memory may have deceived him as to the name of the piece, to which Philidor had made the insignificant contribution, and yet he may have been correct as to the fact of the contribution. That there once existed such a piece as *Les Pèlerins de la Mecque* appears from Fétis himself: he says that Gluck once wrote music for it. Fétis adds, that the *Annales dramatiques* ascribe to Philidor the music of *le Diable à quatre*—a most evident error, (says Fétis,) for the score of *Blaise le Savetier* is inscribed *œuvre premier*. A strange argument, which would prove that Philidor had not written even the *Lauda Jerusalem*, which Fétis acknowledges. The fact appears to be, that Philidor had felt his way by writing several insignificant things, which he afterwards did not think worth mentioning or recollecting; and that the score of *Blaise* was marked *œuvre premier* because it was his first published work.

\* It was represented March 9th, 1759. "The contemporary historians of the *Opéra-Comique* inform us, (says Fétis,) that this piece was brilliantly successful. In it, Philidor showed himself to be a far more skilful harmonist than the French composers of his day; nay, whatever some may say, there was no want of melody; but his phrasing often violates dramatic truth, and his prosody is very defective. There are, nevertheless, several things in *Blaise le Savetier*, which predicted a

had now ascertained his true vocation, and continued to produce opera after opera, often at the rate of two a year. Of these I am in no condition to speak, otherwise than in the words of those who have studied the scores. His second opera (*l'Huitre et les Plaideurs*) merely sustained the reputation won by *Blaise le Savetier*; but in those, which he produced immediately afterwards, his genius (says Fétis) took a higher flight. In each of them, particular passages are specified by the same consummate critic as not only remarkable for some peculiar beauty, but also as even deserving to be looked upon with wonder, considering the state of French dramatic music at the time. The insignificant *Maréchal Ferrant*, by the charm of its music alone, attained an unheard-of success: nay, it had the singular good fortune—considering how speedily the fashion of operatic favourites passes away—to retain its place on the stage until so near, at least, to the present day, that I have myself conversed with a musical amateur who had heard it in Paris. It deserves to be noted, also, that Philidor—although a special favourite of the wits, who took sides, in the *Bouffon*-war, against the detestable French music—did not win their favour by

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brilliant career for its author, and in particular the trio, *Le ressort est, je crois, mêlé.*” This little opera was one of those, which were chosen to open the new *Comédie-Italienne* with, in 1762, and continued to be a favourite for half a century.

appearing as an imitator of the Italians, any more than of the Germans. His genius was marked—according to the very decided expression of M. Fétis—by a character totally different from that of any of his contemporaries. Nearly every one, even of his lightest comic operas, gives evidence, not merely of originality in general, but also of novel improvement in the details—some unprecedented combination of the voices, some expressive ingenuity of rhythm, some bold innovation in managing the scanty resources of his orchestra. So far, in fact, was Philidor in advance of his countrymen, in his genius for instrumentation, that he even anticipated some of the effects, which are the glory of the great German school. But favourite as he was—yet working for his art rather than for immediate popularity—he sometimes failed to draw forth the usual approbation. It was presently seen, however, that what jarred upon the popular ear at first, were real beauties. *Tom Jones*, for example, which was at first fairly “damned,” soon secured the most enthusiastic recognition of its merits—merits so great and original, that Fétis pronounces the scores of *Tom Jones* and *Le Sorcier* to be the *chef-d’œuvre* of Philidor. Even Grimm, with all his regard for Philidor, sometimes complains of a new opera of his as “too noisy ;” for such was the name given to a dramatic employment of the instruments, by those who had

been accustomed to hear them only as an inexpressive accompaniment: Philidor was "noisy," in short, because he anticipated Gluck in making his orchestra, what Horace would have his Chorus, one of his *dramatis personæ*.\*

By the time that Philidor had produced his fourth opera, (*Le Jardinier et son Seigneur*), his reputation was so high and so firmly established, that "he reigned as King, in some sort—(such is the strong language of Fétis)—upon the second lyric theatre of France." He did not, indeed, reign alone—he saw without envy a brother near his throne, in the person of MONSIGNY. This melodious composer was a creation of the *Bouffons*: his dormant genius for composition was suddenly evoked, in full power, by hearing these foreign artists sing Pergolese's Intermezzo, *La Serva Padrona*, between two stupid acts of some French "serious opera," at the *Académie Royale de Musique*. The sensibility, upon which he drew for giving soul to his melodies, was overpowering even to himself; and by dint of an endowment so remarkable, although excessively weak in musical

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\* Oreste, dans *Iphigénie en Tauride*, dit: *Le calme rentre dans mon âme*, et l'air qu'il chante exprime ce sentiment; mais l'accompagnement de cet air est sombre et agité. Les musiciens, étonnés de ce contraste, voulaient adoucir l'accompagnement en l'exécutant; Gluck s'en irritait, et leur criait: "N'écoutez pas Oreste: il dit qu'il est calme; il ment."—Mme de Staël (*De l'Allemagne*, Seconde Partie, chap. xxxii.)

science and technical skill, he enjoyed a popularity quite equal to that of Philidor. But what could such an unfurnished composer do for the advancement of the art in France, compared with Philidor—who, with a genius as original, had at his command all the resources of science, with the spirit of invention and improvement, that marked him for a true reformer? Between them both they secured for the *Opéra-Comique*—the homely *Théâtre de la Foire*—an ascendancy, which must have been infinitely disgusting to the respectable M. Rébel of the dull and aristocratic *Académie*. Between the *Théâtre de la Foire* and the *Académie*, however, there could be no rivalry. Not so with the *Théâtre-Italien*. That establishment was likewise a dealer in comic opera, and had, in fact, taken upon itself many airs over the homelier “Fair-Theatre.” But now the tables were turned. While the Parisians thronged to hear the original native music of Philidor and Monigny, Caillot had to sing in Italian pieces to empty benches; and, in the year 1762, the *Théâtre-Italien* was obliged to come down from its arrogant position, and to solicit and perfect an amalgamation with the less dignified concern of the *Foire*. The *Opéra-Comique* must have received the overtures of her rival with the good-humour, that success can well afford; for, in agreeing to the name of *La Comédie-Italienne* as that of the *amalgam*, she surrendered half

of her own honourable title. It is to be hoped, that the *Opéra-Comique* in thus merging herself in the *Comédie-Italienne*, did not forget that she owed her triumph, more than to any other man, to her first composer, PHILIDOR.\*

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\* The portion of all this historical matter, that is personal to Philidor, is derived from La Borde, Twiss, and Fétis's *Biographie Universelle*. For the rest, I have also used—besides Burney—two excellent articles of Fétis, originally written for his celebrated *Revue Musicale*, and afterwards introduced into his *Curiosités de la Musique*. One is entitled *De la Musique en France*, and the other, *Sur l'Opéra-Comique*.





## CHAPTER IV.

### PHILIDOR IN MIDDLE LIFE.

**H**AVING brought Philidor to this stage of his professional career, it is proper to pause, for the purpose of chronicling two other events of his life, which may have been nearly as important in his eyes as the success of his operas. Soon after the musical cobbler had gladdened the merry Parisians, the triumphant composer took to himself a wife ; but long before that time he had beaten his old master. When Philidor left Paris, in 1745, although he had for some time been playing even games with M. de Légal, and although his own name was the one great name “to conjure with,” on account of his phenomenal feats of blindfold playing, he had not ceased to recognize his old master as still his master and superior. But nine years of practice, with a great variety of players, had authorized him to look for neither superior nor equal ; and when, in 1755, a match was arranged between the pupil and his master, who was still at

the height of his strength, the result placed the crown firmly and indisputably upon the head of Philidor. This, says Twiss, was their last match. But whether they afterwards played together or not, in less solemn encounters, they certainly retained their old relations of friendship, and both continued, for many a long year, to be the two unapproachable glories of the *Café de la Régence*.\*

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\* Twiss, (*Chefs*, vol. i. p. 163,) writing in 1787, says: "Mr. de Légalle, who is now eighty-five years of age, is the best Chefs-player in France after Mr. Philidor. The last match these gentlemen played was in 1755, when the Scholar beat his Master." Légal must, consequently, have been born about 1702, and, at the period of the match, was fifty-three years old. Mr. Walker, intending merely to copy Twiss, says in his text, "About this time he played a match at Chefs with M. de Légalle, and had the pleasure of conquering his old master," and continues, in a note: "At the respected age of eighty-five, M. de Légalle was still the best player in France, always excepting Philidor." Unhappily, Mr. Walker's words (after the necessary change of Twiss's "is" into "was") can be made to signify, that Légal was eighty-five, not at the time of Twiss's writing (1787,) but at the date of his match with Philidor, thirty-two years earlier. Accordingly, in the wretched *Biographie* of the La Bourdonnais-Méry *Palamède*, all the glory of Philidor's victory over his master is taken away by the following perversion of the English original: "Il se mesura alors avec son ancien maître, M. de Légal, et il fut vainqueur. Mais M. de Légal était alors affaibli par l'âge; il était cependant doué d'une organisation extraordinaire, car à l'âge de quatre-vingt-cinq ans, il était encore le plus fort joueur de France après Philidor." It may be thought, however, that the *Palamède* is supported in its assertion, that Légal was "weakened by age" at fifty-three, by the words of the Abbé Roman in his poem



On the 13th of February, 1760, Philidor married Angélique-Henriette-Elisabeth Richer, daughter of a respectable composer, and sister of three clever musicians, one of whom was long at the head of his profession as a singer and teacher of singing. The wife of Philidor, born in 1736, was also an excellent musician, and is spoken of by Gerber as still, ten years after her marriage, in high reputation as a singer at the *Concert Spirituel*.\* It is a sound maxim,

*Les Écbeux*, which is said, in Couvret's note to the Preface, to have been written in the year 1760:—

Mais Philidor est encore dans cet âge  
Où l'on jouit de toute sa vigueur;  
Légal du temps éprouve le dommage—  
Froide vieillisse! ainsi donc ta langueur  
Nous ravit tout, et génie et courage.

*Les Écbeux*, chant iv.

But, in the first place, it is at any rate idle to speak of a man as already enfeebled or chilled in his Chefs-powers at fifty-three, when the same man was able to beat everybody but Philidor at eighty-five; and, in the second place, the Poet was speaking of Philidor and Légal, with reference—not to the match in 1755—but to a period at least fifteen years later, when the former was about forty-five, and the latter about sixty-nine—the fourth canto of *Les Écbeux* having been written more than ten years after the first.

\* The *Concert Spirituel* (so often spoken of in French musical history) was instituted in 1725 at the suggestion of Anne Danican-Philidor, (a half-brother of our own François-André,) for the purpose of furnishing an entertainment of religious and instrumental music, at times when it was not permitted to open the Opera-houses. The concerts were given in a hall of the Tuilleries. (See Fétis "*Sur le Concert Spirituel*" in his *Curiosités de la Musique*.)—[Gerber's authority was Burney, who heard

abundantly sustained by experience, that the happiest marriages are those, in which the disposition and mental constitution of each party forms—not the counterpart—but the complement to that of the other.\* Philidor's marriage appears, from the scanty but decisive testimony we possess, to have been emphatically of this kind. He was rather cheerfully quiet and serious; she was gay and lively. She, again, is spoken of as brilliant and witty in conversation; poor Philidor hardly knew if there be such a thing as wit.† There are other things, however, quite as satisfactory, in the long run, as wit and

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Madame Philidor sing a Motett of her husband's composition, at the *Concert Spirituel*, on the 15th of June, 1770.—*Present State of Music in France and Italy*, p. 26.]

\* You may depend upon it, (says Coleridge,) that a slight contrast of character is very material to happiness in marriage.—Sympathy constitutes friendship; but in love there is a sort of antipathy, or opposing passion. Each strives to be the other, and both together make up one whole. (*Table Talk*.)

† The only *bon mot* recorded of him appears to have been uttered very seriously, without the least thought of being witty. "One day, he entered the house at the moment when two of his sons, of about fourteen and sixteen, were trying their strength at Chess. He looked at their game, and after following it for two or three moves, said to his wife, *Ma chère amie*, our children have fairly succeeded in making Chess a game of chance." (André Philidor.)—Twiss, (*Miscellanies*, vol. ii. p. 112,) says, that Philidor never taught Chess to any of his numerous children. André's anecdote shows, however, that Philidor by no means prohibited his children from learning Chess, although he may never have chosen to teach them himself.

repartee. Philidor's letters prove, that he felt a lively interest in the current topics of the day, and that he could express himself in reference to them with clearness and ease. There is good reason, therefore, to believe, that his conversation, although not brilliant, was every way agreeable and even interesting. It appears always to have exhibited that simple frankness, which he inherited from his mother. The confidence, which such a characteristic impresses upon us, that we are talking with a perfectly straightforward and sincere man, is an ample compensation for the absence of those cold displays of talent, "where no heart is." The *Memoirs of Grétry* inform us, how perfectly *he* found the character and conduct of Philidor to correspond with his very agreeable simplicity of language and manners. His wife appears sometimes to have made a little merry with some of his peculiarities, but he could have understood nothing of her mirth but the affection it covertly signified, for by no possibility could he be made to comprehend a joke.\* The

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\* A merry relation of his, for the purpose of putting this negative quality of Philidor's to the proof, one day gravely expressed the wish that he were the owner of a carriage, that he might sit at his window and see himself ride by. Philidor reflected a moment, until he had analyzed the "position," and then remarked, "What you have said there, my dear friend, is quite inconsiderate and foolish:—you could not be at your window and in your carriage at the same moment; consequently, it would be impossible to see yourself ride by." (*Lardin.*)

sincerity of their mutual attachment, his devotion to her and to his children, the amiable and artless words and ways, in which he was wont to express that attachment and devotion, are not only preserved in the traditions of his descendants, but are also evinced by the unpretending letters which he wrote home from London in later years. She reminds him, thirty years after their marriage, of the happy 13th of February, 1760; and he thanks her in return, and renews the declaration of his unabated and tender affection, in terms which make this one homely letter worth more, in its way, than volumes of Madame de Sévigné.\*

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Another joke of this kind, (among the André Philidor and Lardin anecdotes,) is suited exclusively to French manners, and may as well, therefore, be given in the original: Richer, son beau-frère, vient le voir un matin et d'assez bonne heure: il le trouve encore couché, et s'écrie en entrant: "Comment, ma soeur! Je vous trouve couché, avec M. Philidor!"—"Mais, mon ami, c'est ma femme," répond Philidor; et cette réponse, Richer la lui a fait faire plus de cinquante fois dans le même à-propos.

\* Ce 23 Février, 1790.—Ma très-chère et très-bonne amie, j'ai reçues deux lettres, et je te remercie de ton souvenir du jour, où nous sommes liées pour la vie. Je n'aurai rien de plus pressé que de songer à toi, ainsi qu'à nos enfans. Tu embrasseras deux fois notre chère fille pour moi, et tu lui diras, que si elle veut me donner des preuves de son amitié, ce sera de ne point négliger son piano-forte. Je te souhaite une aussi bonne santé que celle dont je jouis; et je te jure de nouveau, que je t'aime aussi tendrement, que le premier jour que nous nous sommes connus; et c'est avec ces sentimens que je suis, pour la vie, votre très-cher et très-tendre ami, A. D. PHILIDOR.—[I am

The parties thus happily brought together were not destined to pass their wedded life in solitude. Sons and daughters were born to them—although not on quite so patriarchal a scale as the biographers would have us believe. When Twiss visited Philidor, and made the acquaintance of Madame Philidor, at Paris, in 1783, he fell, by some chance, into the strange delusion, that the then living progeny of his host and hostess amounted to nineteen *enfants terribles*; and Mr. Walker has added to the terrors of such a brood by printing the NINETEEN in capitals. But there were really only five sons and two daughters in all; and of these one of either sex died in early childhood:—the rest survived their father.\*

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tempted to add the closing paragraph of another letter of Philidor's (of which the autograph original is in my possession) under date of London, May 17th, 1787. (It begins: *Ma très-chère et charmante amie.*) \* \* \* \* L'espérance que j'ai de pouvoir partir dans trois semaines me fait un si grand plaisir, que je m'ennuie beaucoup moins. Enfin, ma chère bonne amie, ce sera pour moi une fête au-dessus de toute expression, lorsque j'aurai le bonheur de te revoir, t'embrasser, et te jurer que je ne cesserai jamais de t'aimer, et d'être pour la vie ton très-cher et très-bon ami, A. D. PHILIDOR.]

\* His eldest son, André-Joseph-Hélène, died June 6th, 1845, in his eighty-third year. Lardin says he survived all his brothers. Yet Quérrard (*Supercheries*, tom. iii. p. 459) mentions another son, Auguste Danican, (who would appear to have dropt the ancient *fobriquet*,) known as a royalist general. He was condemned to death, but escaped, and died in Holstein, in December, 1848, eighty-five years old—which would make him born in the same year with André. I suspect, therefore, that there is some mistake here. [According to the new *Biogra-*

What slight record we have of this period indicates, that Philidor fell at once quietly into such a daily routine of industrious occupation at home, and quiet amusement at his favourite *Café*, as comported with his duty to his family and his profession, and with the necessity of a relaxation suited to the character of his mind. The morning appears to have been devoted to composition, which he pursued in the most entire absorption and absence of mind, accompanying his work with a perpetual twisting and turning of his body and limbs, which his pleasant wife used to describe by saying, that her husband was playing the silk-worm. On finishing his genial task, and beginning to dress for his walk to *La Régence*, the thing was sometimes found impracticable for lack of garments. If a poor musician had come in upon him, during these hours of *robe de chambre* abstraction, the extreme kindheartedness and absence of Philidor knew no resistance to the appeal

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*pbie Générale*, Quérard was certainly in error—General Danican was not a son of Philidor's.]—The name only of another son is mentioned as an interlocutor in a dialogue, illustrative of Philidor's absence of mind. "Frédéric!—Papa!—Es tu là?—Oui, papa.—Tu n'est pas donc sorti?—Non, papa.—Eh bien! tu vas chez Marmontel, etc."—Philidor's only daughter, Elyse, beautiful and lively, like her mother, at twenty-eight married Pradher, then only seventeen, who became afterwards a distinguished professor at the *Conservatoire*. She died in August, 1825, at the age of fifty. She was the only musician of his children:—none of them had any skill in Chess.

for charity, and precluded all discrimination of means. He gave whatever he could lay his hands on—coat, hat, shoes; and when coin could not be found in the pocket of his *culotte*, he could be prevented from giving the garment itself only by the watchful interposition of a sensible maid-servant, to whom Madame Philidor committed the guardianship of the dear filkworm while plying his work.

The morning task completed, he seems to have gone regularly to the *Café de la Régence*, and always to have taken his seat at the same Chefs-table, over which his portrait afterwards continued to hang, until the old building itself was finally demolished, in the barbarous spirit of modern improvement. At the board, Philidor became as completely absorbed as he had been at his desk; and his meditations on a difficult position were accompanied by the same gyration of the body and the same twisting of the limbs.\* Nor do such meditations appear to have borrowed any solemnity from silence. The stranger, who approached—and not without awe—the table of PHILIDOR, at some critical moment of the game, might be amazed to hear the profound Master of “thoughtful Chefs” murmuring ludicrously disjointed propositions, that gave little evi-

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\* Lardin (from André Philidor), and St. Amant, on the authority of a contemporary of Philidor’s—the Chevalier de Barneville, I suppose, who died in 1842, at the age of ninety-four.

dence of any severe logical process going on in his mind.\* Such filk-worm peculiarities and such effusions of abstractedness were, no doubt, regarded as respectfully here, as they were tenderly at home:—Philidor was always and everywhere an object of respect, even in a circle, that embraced not a few of those names, wherewith all Europe had already rung, or was soon to ring, from side to side. For it was in this same *Café* that Voltaire liked to practise his favourite game, whenever he lived at Paris, while Jean-Jacques laboured perseveringly, but in vain, to advance one step beyond his first essay, when he gave the Rook to Bagueret. Here, at a later day, our own Franklin diffused the sunshine of his ever clear and cheerful mind in the midst of the storm of noise and talk, with which Frenchmen will surround themselves, even while playing Chefs; and Philidor

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\* Sévelinges (*Biographie Universelle*, art. PHILIDOR) relates an anecdote of La Garde's taking a friend to see his idol play Chefs, and being obliged to account for his strangely foolish talk by crying out that it was all *genius*. This trifling anecdote is repeated by other writers, with several variations, the worst of which is poor André's, who—being a *bon vivant*, and not a Chefs-player—misunderstood Sévelinges's word "table," and wrote his father down as talking like a fool at the dinner-table (*un repas*). But Sévelinges appears merely to have been illustrating a habit—which Philidor had in common with many good players—of unconsciously talking any kind of nonsense, while absorbed in the study of a difficult position. The newspaper notices of his celebrated blindfold games in London mention, accordingly, his indulging himself in *pleasantries* during his severe mental labour.



had not yet ceased to sit at his wonted table, when Maximilian Robespierre had begun to mingle meditations of murder and regicide with combinations for mating the King.

The imagination so readily pictures to itself the appearance and conduct, in any situation, of a man so very natural and simple, so amiable and so courteous, that we do not at first reflect, how all but destitute we are of materials for continuing the history of Philidor's "familiar day." We are left to guess, with what deepfelt enjoyment he sat down to the simple meal, that awaited him, on his return from the *Café*, by the longing he expressed, while a daily guest at the tables of the great in London, for his plain *pot-au-feu* at home. His evenings were doubtless spent, for the most part, at the Opera-house, which was, in some sort, his own; but how he deported himself there, in the midst of the musicians and composers, his friends and brothers, can only be inferred from what we happen to know of his habitual feelings and conduct towards them under other circumstances. When Grétry, for example, came to Paris in 1767, with all his great reputation still to make, he found Philidor not only frank and cordial—incapable of jealousy towards a youthful competitor for professional honours—but also active and self-renunciant in his friendship. He exerted himself warmly to induce the prime poet of the Opera

to give Grétry the *libretto* just composed for himself; and when the consent, at first granted, was afterwards withdrawn, he invited Grétry to unite his music and his name with his own, now so celebrated, in *Le Jardinier de Sidon*.\* So his family beheld him with awe, some years later, reading the score of Sacchini's successful *Œdipe à Colone* with a sympathetic emotion, that expressed itself in sobs and tears. The only picture we have of him, in the theatre itself, among those to whom was intrusted the execution of his productions, is certainly far less solemn, but quite as characteristic:—it represents him in company with his handsome André, at the moment of meeting, behind the scenes, a certain pretty Operasinger, (Mademoiselle Colombe,) who had condescended to become the boy's "first love"—the father bowing to the ground before her, and politely thanking her for having taken the raw youth into training, with the most innocent unconsciousness of the strange confusion, with which he was overwhelming both lad and lady, by taking such parental cognizance of their little private arrangements.†

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\* Grétry, (*Mémoires*, tome i. p. 428.)

† "Ah! Mademoiselle, je vous remercie de vous être chargée de mon jeune gaillard; j'espère que vous en serez contente."—He astounded another of his hopeful sons one day, at dinner, by pulling out his watch, and saying, with the most perfect *bonhomie*: "Partez, Frédéric; allez mon fils; il ne faut jamais faire attendre les dames."

To complete, as far as possible, this very imperfect sketch of Philidor in middle life, it is proper to mention one or two honours conferred upon him, with some account of his second attempt to approach the same conservative *Académie*, over which M. Rébel had presided as Director.

The honour, which Philidor appears to have set the highest value upon, was "thrust upon him," like Falstaff's, by circumstances. He had two unmarried sisters, who very sensibly provided for themselves by going into business. But in those days, no one could practice even the art and mystery of making millinery without being recognized, as a *master* in the craft, by some appropriate guild. All guilds, however, had some reason, good or bad, for excluding women from mastership, yet permitted them to be represented by one of the rival sex. Philidor, therefore, for his sisters' sake, very eagerly enrolled himself in the confraternity of Mercers—nobody (says his descendant) can well guess his reason for the choice; and thenceforth nothing gave him so much delight as to sign himself PHILIDOR, *Marchand Mercier*:—nay, when he furnished his name for the baptismal certificates of his children, it was with this mercantile appendage.

To this period of his life we may, perhaps, refer the peculiar honour, which he received from the good city of Paris—that of having his bust ordered

of Pajou. The work was executed in *terra cotta*, and was pronounced by his family to be an admirable likeness. It was afterwards presented by the city to Madame Philidor.\* If the portrait in the Museum of Versailles be a work of the last century, that too, judging by the age represented, must belong to the same epoch. In that case, it was probably an honour conferred by his Sovereign, as the other had been by the city.†

The King took another occasion to distinguish him, in connection with his art. The success which he had gained at the *Opéra-Comique* had hitherto produced no effect upon the conservative *Académie*, or *Opéra-Française*:—there the old French music still reigned triumphant. He now, in 1766, had the boldness to aim at extending the work of reform, which had been so popular at the *Foire St. Laurent*, to the grave scene of the more aristocratic Opera. With this view, he composed, no longer a Comic but a Tragic Opera, *Ernelinde Princesse de Norvège*,

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\* Having never seen any cast or engraving of this bust, I can only conjecture, that it may have been executed during the middle period of his life. Pajou was made Professor in the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1767, but lived until 1809.

† This portrait was lithographed for the third volume of St. Amant's *Palamède*. M. Alliey, in the first of his interesting articles entitled *Musée de l'Échiquier*, (*Palamède*, tome v. p. 404,) speaks of it as admirable; but, unfortunately, he neither gives the name of the painter, nor the date of the portrait.

“without mythology,” (says Twiss,) “and with recitative, after the Italian manner, intermixed with airs.” He could hardly have expected any greater success than he actually met with. He informed Twiss, that the Nobility, who were the last and most bigoted partisans of the old French music, caballed against him; that the actors and singers did their best to ruin the effect of the piece; and that the orchestra played their worst.\* Yet Philidor’s music had force enough to make head against all this. His opera was performed for eight successive nights; and the King himself was so well pleased with it, (says our author,) that he privately rewarded the composer with a pension of twenty-five *louis d’or* from his privy purse.†

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\* Philidor did not say this, without grounds, merely to cover his partial failure—Gluck had to encounter precisely the same difficulties, when he came to Paris, in 1774, to bring out his *Iphigénie*—difficulties, which to him also would have been insurmountable, if he had not had the powerful support of the Queen, his former pupil, Marie Antoinette. Even then, it took six full months of rehearsal to “break in” the perverse singers and musicians. All Paris daily thronged to see the process as performed by the frightful old German, who first took off coat and wig, then armed himself with a stout cudgel for a *bâton*, and proceeded to drill, scold, threaten, and demonstrate, until even his Herculean frame could stand no more for the day. What could poor Philidor do with a company, that could be made to do justice to his music only by a breaking-in like this?

† Of the representation of this Opera, La Borde says, it was the epoch of a musical reform at the *Opéra-Française*, and that it was the

One other piece of his should be mentioned—the comic opera, *Le Sorcier*\*—because it is in reference to it, that the charge of plagiarism has been made against Philidor—and that, too, by a mean countryman of his own. M. de Sévelinges, in the article PHILIDOR, of the well-known *Biographie Universelle*, affirms, that our composer transferred to *Le Sorcier*, note for note, a remarkable air of Gluck's *Orfeo*, which had been long before represented in

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model of a new style, which foreign composers (I suppose he means Gluck) had only imitated after Philidor. Fétis speaks of *Ernelinde* as containing beautiful choruses, and effects of instrumentation, which have since been imitated by others. It was with a view, I suppose, to some of these effects, that Philidor changed the composition of the orchestra by introducing the novelty of another double-bass.—Burney, (*History*, vol. iv. p. 617,) writing in 1789, says: “In 1770, the serious opera had not advanced a step towards perfection, or even variety, in five years time, if the Opera of *Ernelinde*, by Philidor, be excepted, in which that ingenious composer quitted the ancient opera style of his country, accelerated the recitatives, and terminated his scenes with many excellent airs, à l’*Italienne*.” Scudo says, in 1858, “The choruses of *Ernelinde* are still celebrated”—one of them (*Furons sur ces glaives sanglants*) having been incorporated into the current oratorio of *Saül*. (Castil-Blaze, *De l’Opéra*, tome ii. p. 130.)

\* According to Castil-Blaze, *Le Sorcier*, in other respects a chef-d’œuvre, contained an amusing specimen of Philidor’s comic humour:—“Dix ans après, [he is speaking of the *Bouffon* war,] le 2 janvier, 1764, Philidor égayait les habitués de la *Comédie-Italienne* en leur présentant la caricature du chant français de cette époque. Dans la scène d’évocation du *Sorcier*, Caillot imitait les acteurs de l’Opéra d’une manière très-plaisante.” (*L’Opéra-Italien*, p. 150.)

Italy. A still meaner Frenchman adds the assertion, that Philidor had contrived to get possession of the score of the *Orfeo*.\* M. Fétis more than makes up for all his skepticism, by his trenchant exposure of this reckless attack upon the probity of Philidor. His answer is, *First*, Gluck's *Orfeo* was played, not in Italy at all, but at Vienna, in July, 1764, while Philidor's *Sorcier* was played at Paris, on the 2d day of January, *six months earlier*, and, *Secondly*, M. Fétis had read the scores of both pieces, and had found that there was not a single phrase common to both.† This same Gluck was the one, who was destined afterwards to perfect that reform of the serious opera, in which Philidor's success had been only partial; yet so far was either of these great men from any envy or jealousy of the other, that, upon some occasion, when Gluck, being obliged to absent himself from Paris, needed the assistance of some competent and friendly brother in the art to superintend the repetition of this same *Orphée*, (in

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\* [There appears to have been another and an earlier calumniator in the case. According to M. Fétis, the charge of plagiarism originated with Favart, the dramatic poet.]

† "C'est cependant (writes M. Fétis with just indignation) de cette anecdote que l'auteur de la *Biographie universelle et portative des contemporains* est parti pour refuser le génie de la musique à Philidor, et le représenter comme un homme qui ne vivait que de plagiat, tandis que le talent de ce compositeur a un caractère absolument différent de tous ses contemporains."

its French dress,) he left his score in the hands of Philidor, who directed the rehearsals with as much attention and interest as if the piece had been his own.\*

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\* Such is the only way in which I can make anything satisfactory out of André Philidor's statement, that his father superintended the rehearsals of the *Orphée* in 1774—the very year of Gluck's first arrival in Paris, when he certainly brought out his Opera under his own eye. But between 1774 and 1779 Gluck once, at least, (and probably more than once,) returned to Vienna; and André's story appears to be in *some* shape entitled to belief: *First*, because it is a family tradition, not likely to be entirely without foundation, and, *Secondly*, because it contains one fact, in common with the second of the two slanders, viz., the possession of Gluck's score by Philidor.







## CHAPTER V:

### PHILIDOR AND THE LONDON CHESS-CLUB.

**F**OR nearly twenty years had Philidor been thus pursuing the even tenor of his professional labours, when, in 1772, the current of his remaining years received a new direction. "This year," (says Mr. Twiss,) "he came to England, and passed a month with his friends." It seems, however, hard to believe, that Philidor, at the age of forty-six—after the wandering spirit of his youth had been, for eighteen years, thoroughly laid and smothered by wife and children and professional success—should have suddenly undertaken, of his own accord, to visit a scene, from which the most of his old friends, stout Sir Abraham, dark Stamma, and their contemporaries, must have long since disappeared.\* It is

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\* Sir Abraham Janssen died, Feb. 19th, 1765, at Paris, where he appears to have been living for several years. [Twiss's date of 1763 is probably not so much a mistake, as a misprint.] Some account of him may be found in Nichols's *Anecdotes*, (vol. iii. pp. 406-11.)—When

far more likely, that Philidor was drawn from his regular and industrious way of life by a special and pressing invitation. A younger generation of amateurs had grown up in England, that seemed disposed to aim at being "better than their fathers." In 1770, a new Club, at the Salopian Coffee-house, had superseded the heroic rendezvous of Old Slaughter. Count Brühl, on whose boyish path we have sometimes fancied that the light of Philidor's countenance may have fallen in 1752, had now been for several years resident in England, where, in 1767, he had married an English wife.\* Now, we know that he occasionally visited Paris;† and we may be certain, that he did not visit Paris without visiting all that made Paris Paris to a Chefs-player—the *Café de la Régence* and Philidor. May it not, then,

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Stamma published his *Noble Game of Chefs*, in 1745, he informed the public, that "no Copies of the Book were genuine, but such as were sign'd by him." The copies, which have this signature are very rare. It may, therefore, be inferred, that Stamma died pretty soon after the publication of this edition—or, at any rate, long before the whole of it had been disposed of.

\* John Maurice, Count Brühl, Envoy of the Elector of Saxony, at London, was born Dec. 20th, 1736, and died Feb. 22d, 1809, aged 72. He would, therefore, have been about fourteen or fifteen in 1752, when I have ventured to think a visit of Philidor's to Dresden possible. According to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, on the 6th day of July, 1767, Count Brühl was married to the Countess-dowager of Egremont.

† In his Letter to Daines Barrington (*Archæologia*, vol. ix.) he uses the expression "during my last visit to Paris."

be a most reasonable, and by no means a fanciful, conjecture, that the invitation of Count Brühl, in behalf of the enthusiastic amateurs whom he represented, had something to do with this "coming to England and passing a month with his friends?"\*

Be this, however, as it may, the presence of Philidor seems to have renewed the demonstration, that there was something in his character, independent of his talents, that had a peculiar charm for the English mind. It was the league between Kwafind and Chibiabos again. The "very strong" Englishman loved and respected the "gentle" Frenchman, doubly rich in faculties, which he bore so meekly—amiable in society, but with a single heart for his loved ones at home—generous, yet self-denying and provident, and of a life stainless in its purity and integrity. A month's enjoyment of his presence, so agreeable and so instructive, proved to be what the English players would not willingly be without:—having had it once, they wanted it again and always. Now, what the English like they will have; and could they have got possession of Philidor, with his

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\* [Philidor's interest in the Chefs-playing circles of London may have been kept alive by two other causes, namely, the continued presence of Sir Abraham Janssen, at Paris, and the occasional visits of other native amateurs—for his acquaintance with Englishmen lay very much with those who were best able, and quite likely, to indulge themselves in a trip to the most attractive of foreign capitals.]

golden mines of Chefs-skill, in no other way, I make no doubt they would have *annexed* him by the strong hand, like some Scinde or Oude of remote Hindostan; but fortunately it occurred to them to try what liberal offers would do, along with permanent arrangements for making those offers effectual. In 1774, therefore, they formed a new Club in St. James Street, under the very shadow of the Palace. The number of members was limited to a hundred:—the terms of subscription, three guineas. The evidence of some strong impulse and of some special object, in forming this Club, may be found in the character of its original members. It was no mere private association of quiet Chefs-players: statesmen, warriors, men of letters—all crowded forward to enter its ranks; inasmuch that when Gibbon came to town, resolved to play a part in high life, he joined the new Chefs-club as one of the "*fashionable Clubs*." One noble lady, Dr. Franklin's Mrs. Howe,\* stood by the side of a Church dignitary, the Bishop of Durham,† at the head of a list, on which

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\* An interesting account of this lady, of whose "discretion and excellent understanding" Dr. Franklin formed so high an opinion, may be found in Mr. Fiske's paper on the "Chefs-life of Benjamin Franklin," in the *Book of the First American Chefs-Congress*, pp. 331-39.

† The "Golden See" was at this time held by John Egerton, father of the Hon. Francis Egerton, (afterwards Duke of Bridgewater,) in whose house, at Paris, (in 1807,) the curious consultation-games were

—besides uncouth Dukes, Marquisses, and Earls —were found the historical names of Charles James Fox and Lord Mansfield, of Erskine, Wedderburne, and the Marquis of Rockingham,—of Elliot, the defender of Gibraltar,—of Frazer, who met a soldier's death, and Burgoyne, who underwent a soldier's last humiliation, at American Saratoga.

The first step of the new Club was to provide, that a subscription should be annually made amongst its members, to be offered to Philidor, as an inducement to him to spend the *Season* of every year in London—a period which at that time covered the four months from February to June.\* There could have been no resisting so liberal an offer, made by such men, actuated by feelings so friendly and respectful. His acceptance of the offer would not of necessity interfere seriously with his labours, or lessen his emoluments, as a musician, while it would be materially increasing his income at a most opportune moment, when the age of his sons must have begun to demand increased expenditure on his part. These considerations were weighty enough to overcome the reluctance which he must have felt, at separating himself, for so large a part of every year, from a

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played, in connection with which the name of DESCHAPELLES is first heard of.—(*Chess Monthly*, vol. ii. pp. 58–59.)

\* This is ascertained from his letters. The earliest date is in February; in one he says he cannot be in Paris until the 20th of June.

home, to which he clung so tenderly; and, in 1775, he spent his first season in London, under the new arrangement.

There are circumstances which tend to show, that the confederate kindness of Philidor's English friends did not end with providing him a salary. The publication of the new edition of the *Analyse*, in 1777, appears to have been promoted by them, with a view to put into his hands an extraordinary sum at the beginning of his connection with the Club. The edition itself was dedicated "to the very illustrious and honourable Members of the Club," and the name of every member, without exception, appears upon the List of Subscribers. The personal exertion of the members to enlarge the List is evinced by the character of the names which were added to their own. We can fancy the Scotch Duke of Athol getting the name of the Scotch Duke of Argyle, and Charles Fox bantering Lord North into putting down his guinea. Gibbon, with his courtly smile and the tap on his snuff-box, may have won the support of Lady Di Beauclerk; and the activity of dear Mrs. Howe shall have (in my mind) the credit of so many of the fifty noble ladies, as did not subscribe in obedience to their husbands. As the French names do not exceed fifty—although these form a brilliant array—the inference is a very clear one, that the edition was especially an

affair of the English Club, and connected with their arrangements for the personal emolument and gratification of the author.\*

Of the habits and occupations of Philidor, during these annual residences in London, we catch no glimpse, until about fifteen years after the arrangement had gone into operation. Eight familiar letters, written between the years 1787 and 1790, enable us to form a pretty clear idea of the amiable old man's day in London, and to conjecture what it may have been, when greener years and better health permitted him to accomplish more. We find him, at past sixty, in respectable lodgings,† devoting a portion of his time—probably the morning hours, as at home—to musical composition,‡ or amusing himself with a walk and gossip with friends, as every Frenchman, and most reasonable men, will do. He meets the Abbé Vogler, and they try a new piano ;

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\* There were two hundred and eighty-three subscribers, and three hundred and sixty-seven copies, in all. The French names are under fifty. Among them are those of *Monsieur*, (afterwards Louis XVIII.,) who was subsequently the head of the Parisian Chefs-Club,—of Philidor's old master, Légal,—of Dukes, Marquisses, Counts, and Marshals many,—and of Marmontel, Raynal, Diderot, and Voltaire.

† “Notre mylord Goy est à Londres, et loge dans la même maison que moi.” (*Letter*, Feb. 20th, 1788.)

‡ “J'avance dans mon ouvrage, et je suis très-content de mes idées. —Je compte que je reviendrai, avec tous mes brouillons de la totalité de mon ouvrage: j'ai la plus grande envie de prouver que la vieillesse ne m'a pas encore éteint le génie.” (*Letter*, April 22d, 1789.)

he falls in with M. de Calonne, who presses him to join him at dinner.\* When not thus appropriated by some special invitation, he goes where he has a standing engagement—to his friend, Count Brühl's. Then both go to the Club, where Philidor finds his regular occupation.† Occasionally, he brings out before a London audience some of his compositions, and then he misses the help and voice of his faithful Richer.‡ At another time, we hear of him at a party, where admission could be gained only by talent and character.§ And sometimes, there is

\* *Letters*, February and March, 1790.

† “Je ne m’amuse que lorsque je songe à toi: je n’ai point encore été à aucun spectacle. Je me promène le matin, et vais dîner chez le Comte de Brühl, et de là à notre Club. Voilà, à peu près, la vie que je mène.” (*Letter*, Feb. 20th, 1788.)

‡ “Mon *Carmen* a été très-bien reçu, mais Richer me manquait.” (*Letter*, June 3d, 1788.)—“J’ai reçu mon *Te Deum*—je vais chercher à pouvoir en faire usage.” (*Letter*, March 20th, 1790.) Gerber (*Historisch Biographisches Lexicon*) says, that Philidor usually gave a Concert of his vocal compositions during each of his London visits, and that (*as they say*) he used to gain from each concert *two hundred guineas*. Of course, an exaggeration.—I may add, that as Philidor played no instrument, he depended upon his wife and her brothers—Louis Richer, the teacher of singing, especially—for trying the effect of any vocal pieces, which he happened to be composing.

§ Mr. Staunton tells the following anecdote, in Tomlinson’s delightful *Chefs-Player’s Annual* for 1856, (p. 160.) “Madame d’Arbly (Miss Burney that was, you know) once told me, that Philidor was at one of her parties; and when she asked him to play at Chefs, he replied: ‘Madame, I am not prepared.’—‘How so? I thought, Mon-



reason to think, the solitariness of his London residence was relieved by the society of his wife and daughter.\*

We have no means of ascertaining, with exactness, the income which Philidor derived from his engagement with the London Club. It does not appear whether the subscription, which was annually renewed, was always for the same amount.† At

feur Philidor, you were always ready to play at Chefs." "Pardon, Madame; when I play at Chefs, I do not dine until I have done playing, and to-day I have already dined."—Miss Burney did not marry General d'Arblay until two years before Philidor's death. It is, therefore, uncertain, whether "her parties" were given at her own, or at her father's, house, and whether she invited Philidor as a distinguished compatriot of her husband's, or as an ornament to the profession of her father. In any case, admission to her parties was an honour.—As to the anecdote itself, I would observe: Philidor, as we have seen, did all his playing at the Club *after* his dinner with Count Brühl. It is, therefore, clear that he must have understood Madame d'Arblay as asking him to give the company a specimen of his *blindfold playing*. For that, he *did* sometimes prepare himself by observing a careful regimen for several days; and the hour mentioned (Twiss, *Chefs*, vol. i. p. 168, and *Miscellanies*, vol. ii. p. 109) for two of his exhibitions, and probably for all, was two o'clock. The dinner of the Club followed.

\* Je ne perds point de vue ton voyage, avec ma fille, l'hiver prochain; et je ne doute aucunement, que tu ne regrettes, autant que moi, de n'avoir pas voulu me suivre. (*Letter*, March 20th, 1790.)

† Upon the whole, however, since both Philidor and Twiss speak of the subscription as raised "for defraying Philidor's expenses," it may be inferred, I think, that such expenses were reckoned, from the first, at some round sum; and that it only remained for the individual members of the Club (who never remained the same for any length of

one time he speaks of having already sent home about seventeen hundred *livres* of it (nearly three hundred and twenty-five dollars;) at another, of fifteen *louis* (sixty odd dollars) being still due. It is more important to note, that Philidor appears always to have calculated on sending every penny of this salary to his family, and on supporting himself by the other gains, which he had the opportunity of making.\* These must have been derived, *first*, from the stakes, for which Chefs has always been played in England, and which, in his case, must have been treated as fees for instruction; and, *secondly*, from the admission-tickets to his exhibitions of blindfold playing. As no one was known to possess that remarkable power before Philidor, and as no one arose in his day to share the possession with him, it was looked upon as a unique phenomenon; and the opportunity for observing it was eagerly sought for by the scientific and the curious. Under these circumstances, his friends of the Club made various arrangements, from time to time, to render the exhibitions of Philidor's blindfold playing a means of adding to his emolument. We are dis-

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time) to determine what share of this sum each would subscribe. I suspect that Gerber's *on dit* refers to Philidor's *salary*, and not to the profits of his concerts.

\* "Mon plan est de vivre au dépens de mes petits profits, et de me donner les choses, dont je pourrais avoir besoin, et d'épargner entièrement ma souscription." (*Letter*, Feb. 20th, 1788.)

tinctly informed, for example, by one of his letters, written in February, 1790, that at the Club-dinner, which followed the first exhibition of the season, it was settled by vote, on motion of General Conway, that there should be a dinner, preceded by a blind-fold match, every other Saturday. What might otherwise have appeared an undignified private speculation, was made every way respectable by the direct patronage and countenance of the distinguished gentlemen, who composed the association; the advertisements were dated, and the games played, in their rooms; and the members appeared as privileged spectators. It is not probable, however, that precisely such exhibitions as these were given, or that they were put on such a footing, until some years after Philidor's arrangement with his English friends in 1775. Diderot's friendly remonstrance with him, in 1782, for perilling the talents and glory of a Pergolese in a *tour de force* more suited to a Greco, unless with the prospect of great pecuniary advantage, implies that exhibitions of *three* games were then a novelty, and that no exhibitions had been hitherto paid for. Twiss speaks of his having played two public matches in 1783 and 1788, and four in 1789. It was not, therefore, as it would appear, until after the fresh enthusiasm, with which Philidor was at first welcomed, had passed away, and the overflowing stream of English bounty had

gradually shrunk to its natural channel, that his friends encouraged him to avail himself of the enduring interest in the display of his unique powers, to make good the falling off in his earlier income. But the revenue from this source, too, must have gradually suffered some diminution, and then the exhibitions were made more frequent. If it be true, that when Diderot remonstrated with him in 1782, Philidor's emolument from his blindfold playing amounted to scores or even hundreds of guineas a season, then it speaks loudly for his unexacting moderation of character, that in 1790—at a time when only fifty-six subscribers encouraged the third edition of his *Analysis*,\* and when he was exerting himself beyond his strength for his family†—he should

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\* A subscription-list so small, compared with that of the second edition, only proves that the Club had ceased to be a fashionable association, organized for the accomplishment of a certain object, and that it had now become a quiet Chefs-Club, and nothing more. There were few members to subscribe or to solicit subscriptions, and no motive for making another extraordinary effort. So reduced had the members become, that when fourteen had assembled at the first dinner of the year 1790, Philidor informed his wife, that the season would be a brilliant one. That the Club retained all their regard for Philidor undiminished was testified that very year by the purchase of his portrait by Robineau for their rooms—"et me voilà (he writes to his wife) *pendu* dans notre salon d'échecs à Londres!"

† "J'apprends, avec grand plaisir, que mes enfans pourront être placés; et réellement j'en serais bien enchanté, attendu que je surpasse mes forces dans ce moment."—(*Letter*, March 20, 1790.)

speak to his wife of eight *louis*\* profit from his first exhibition as a most satisfactory result, without one word of complaint—without one backward glance at the golden showers of a few years before. In fact, the profit and loss account seems to have weighed less with him, than the pleasure he took in the exercise of his rare gift, and in the expressions of delight and wonder, which it never failed to call forth.† The “enchantment” of the spectators was regularly echoed by the press, from the perishable newspaper sheet up to the permanent record of the *Annual Register* itself.‡

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\* Twiss (*Miscellanies*, vol. ii. p. 109) gives Philidor's last advertisement, dated “Chefs Club, 1795.” The price of tickets was then five shillings. In 1790, it was probably the same, for forty-three tickets gave him the eight *louis* clear profit.

† “Il y a des éloges étonnants dans toutes les gazettes, au sujet des trois parties sans voir que j'ai jouées samedi dernier. Ils disent, que la netteté de mes idées augmente avec mes années. Il est vrai, que jamais je n'ai eu la tête aussi nette.” (*Letter*, June 3, 1788.) “J'ai joué samedi dernier mes trois parties à la fois—tout le monde a été dans l'enchantement.” (*Letter*, Feb. 1790.)

‡ Were not the *Palamède* a recognised Chefs-classic, it would hardly be worth while to say anything more, than I have said already, (*anté*, pp. 10, 11,) of its errors in reference to these blindfold exhibitions of Philidor. Perhaps *all* of them are sufficiently refuted by the statement, that they emanate from the brilliant poet and novelist, M. Méry, whose devotion to *historical* accuracy may be estimated by his off-hand way of disposing of Philidor as an *émigré*, who died (*be rather thinks*) in 1795—(“il est mort, je crois, en 1795.”) Some of them, at all events, carry the character of pure and pleasant fiction upon their very

Such were the occupations of Philidor, during his yearly visits to the British capital.\* The tenor

face. When, for example, M. Méry says, that Philidor used to give *Soirées* of [only] *one* or *two* blindfold games at a time, in London; that, by taxing the opulent Englishmen *a guinea* a head for admission, he made money enough to compose operas at his leisure, and to *give lessons in Chess* to Jean-Jacques Rousseau; and that Jean-Jacques [in spite of such instruction] was a weak player, but did not *confess* the fact in his *Confessions*—who does not see, that, as the last of these careless assertions was made for the joke's sake, with full knowledge that it could be confuted on the spot by opening the book, so all the rest are thrown out, with the most entire unconcern, whether the reader shall take them for absolute *fabrications*, or merely for wild *exaggerations*? One of M. Méry's random shots does, indeed, borrow some appearance of approaching the mark, from Philidor's adopting a regimen before playing—namely, the statement, that when Philidor, on just *three* occasions in his life, [precise M. Méry!] played *three* such games at once, his faculties were so completely exhausted, that he was unable, for a long time, to collect his thoughts again. M. Méry, however, appears to have had no other authority for saying this, than Diderot's letter. But Diderot betrays no knowledge of *Philidor's* having actually experienced any such exhaustion: he is merely attempting to frighten Philidor with the apprehension, that he *might* exhaust his faculties, inasmuch as *M. de Légal* had suffered the most alarming prostration from playing only *one* game without the board. The truth is, M. Méry *really* drew his picture from poor La Bourdonnais—as appears clearly enough from a half-recantation in *La Régence* for 1851, (p. 131.) Philidor can have suffered no extraordinary fatigue, or it would have been physically impossible for him to give his blindfold *Soirées* once a fortnight, through the season; nor would he have written, as he did, to his wife, in 1790, with the weight of sixty-four years upon him: “Je t'affure, que cela ne me fatigue pas autant que bien des gens peuvent le croire.”

\* That Philidor really enjoyed living in England for something be-

of his life at home, during the remaining two-thirds of each year, was undoubtedly influenced by his new arrangements, as well as by other causes, which were coming into operation at about the same time, but by no means in such a manner, as to justify the very unfavourable—not to say very harsh—statements of certain thoughtless French writers, who have hastily applied to the whole of his later years the censure, which M. Fétis has too hastily applied to the period from 1785 to his death. While M. Scudo, for example, has simply copied Fétis, with no distrust of his accuracy, M. Adam—the pleasant writer as well as charming composer—has represented Philidor as merely trifling with his profession, and as giving to Music only so much time as he could spare from Chefs.\* But it is certain, that

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sides the money it brought him may be fairly enough inferred from the following anecdote in the later edition of Dibdin's *Bibliomania*, (1842, p. 612)—“William Templeman, of Hare Hatch, Berkshire, was a great Chefs-player. . . . He said, that he once sat on Philidor's knee, who patted his cheek, and told him ‘there was nothing like Chefs and *English roast beef*.’” But he did *not* tell Mr. Templeman, what I dare say Twiss had to extort from him, and then was mean enough to repeat—“Among the *Ladies* he has not met with a first or even second-rate player.” (*Chefs*, vol. i. p. 165.) I call my fair readers to witness, that—so far from adopting this piece of malice into my text—I have degraded it to the foot of the page, and have condemned it to the insignificance of *Brevier*.

\* “Un seul compositeur, depuis Rameau, avait obtenu un succès décidé à ce théâtre, [the *Opéra-Français*,] c'était PHILIDOR avec son

both M. Adam and M. Scudo, and he whom they have followed, M. Fétis, have spoken under very erroneous impressions of the real facts of the case.

From 1759 to 1775—from the composition of *Blaise le Savetier* to his engagement with the English Club—the series of Philidor's musical productions had been unbroken. It would not have been surprising, nor even particularly censurable, if now—after so many years of labour, and upon the approach of old age—he had been tempted, by the large sums he had received from the subscribers to his book, and by his regular annual salary, to consider his profession as substantially changed, and to have indulged himself in a respite from the exciting and exhausting toil of musical composition. And if, with such a view of what was henceforth to be his special avocation and surest resource, he had spent more hours than before at the *Café de la Régence*,

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*Ernelinde*; mais ce compositeur semblait ne prendre son art que comme un délassement; ce qui était sérieux et important pour lui, c'étaient les échecs, et ce n'est que dans les moments perdus que lui laissait son jeu favori, et pour se reposer des fatigues que lui causaient les combinaisons de l'échiquier, qu'il consentait à s'occuper de ses opéras." (Adam, *Derniers Souvenirs d'un Musicien*, p. 183.)—It is a pity that the latest and ablest eulogist of Philidor, M. ARTHUR PUGIN, should have been equally misled, with Adam and Scudo, by the authority of Fétis. M. Pugin's noble rehabilitation of his countryman, in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, (for Sept. 11th and 25th, and Oct. 2d, 1859,) was made without any suspicion, that a stranger had taken the initiative in the same good work.



to keep himself in full strength as a Chefs-player, who could reasonably maintain, that he was not in the way of professional duty? But Philidor did not so reason, nor did he so conduct himself. When he returned from his first season in England, with hundreds of guineas in his pocket, his first thought appears to have been, that he could now achieve something greater in music, than the necessity of providing for constantly-returning wants had permitted him to do before. One act operas, speedily composed for a speedy return of profit, no longer answered to his professional aspirations. Besides, he was now no longer master of the field, which for twenty years had been almost exclusively his own. A new star had risen—not to diminish the lustre of his—but to divide with it the admiring gaze of the public. The operas of Grétry were now an attractive novelty; and Philidor—although his pieces still kept the stage and still elicited the warmest applause—was not so pressed by the Directors for new compositions, as he had been before, nor could he feel the same motive for hastening a fresh appearance.\* He deliberately turned his attention, there-

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\* [How rapidly the operas of Grétry were produced, and with what success they were exhibited, at both the *Opéra-Français* and the *Comédie-Italienne*, appears from the *Mercure Français*. The Publisher and Editor of this periodical, Lacombe, was the brother-in-law of Grétry: it was natural, therefore, that he should be ready enough to extol the compositions of his relative, especially when he had all Paris on his

fore, to another department of professional labour. He took as his theme the *Carmen Seculare* of Horace. So far from being deterred by the difficulties of wedding a characteristic production of ancient Pagan Literature to an art, that bears almost exclusively the stamp of modern Christian cultivation, he appears to have grappled with his task as one that would enable him to do justice to his genius and his science. Upon this task he worked slowly—but, to all appearance, assiduously—for two or three years; yet not with such entire abjuration of his dramatic career, but that he also composed an elaborate Lyric Tragedy, his *Perfée*, during the same period. The *Carmen Seculare* was first brought out at London, in the year 1779, and afterwards at Paris. The great success, which it met with, attracted the attention of Catharine of Russia: she requested a copy of the score, and rewarded the composer with imperial munificence.\* The *Perfée* was brought out at the

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side. The tone of decided respect and admiration, with which La-combe everywhere speaks of Philidor, may be taken as representing the feeling of Grétry himself.]

\* Gerber says "600 Liv." (Pounds sterling, I hope, and not *Livres Tournois*.)—It was performed three nights (says Twiss) at Freemason's Hall. In 1788, it was again brought out in London, at an entertainment given by the Knights of the Bath. (Burney, in Rees's *Cyclopædia*.) It was then published at Paris, "dedicated to the Empress, with an engraven title-page, representing the arms of Russia." (Twiss.) It appears, moreover, from a letter of Philidor's, (June 3, 1778,) that it

*Opéra-Français* in 1780. Two other dramatic compositions, one of which must have been the subject of long and careful study, occupied the time of Philidor for the next four or five years:—the grand opera of *Thémistocle* was represented at Fontainebleau, in presence of the Court, in October, 1785; and a few days later *L' Amitié au Village*, in one act, was brought out at the *Comédie-Italienne*. The tragic piece was remarkable for elegance of style and originality of instrumentation, but did not produce so much effect as its lighter companion, which excited so lively an enthusiasm, that the audience called for the composer—an honour at that time almost without precedent.\*

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was published by subscription—the greater part of the subscribers (I will venture to say) being English.—Catharine addressed her application and acknowledgments to Philidor through his friend Grimm. “Cette grande Princesse,” he writes, “ne se borne pas à vouloir entendre votre ouvrage en concert; elle a fait écrire à un des plus célèbres savants d’Italie, pour lui demander un programme, afin de relever le charme de votre musique par la pompe du spectacle et la représentation exacte des cérémonies religieuses, qui vous ont inspiré.” The heir-presumptive of Frederic the Great acknowledged the receipt of the *Carmen Seculare* in MS. by a letter, (Feb. 10, 1783,) in which he styles himself one of his greatest admirers, and by the gift of a gold snuff-box set with diamonds. When he had become King, he was equally gracious and friendly in returning his thanks for the engraved score. (*Palamède*, t. vii. pp. 179—181.)

\* Fétis.—[It appears, however, that Philidor had received the same honour twenty-one years before. “À la première représentation du *Sorcier*, le parterre, transporté d’admiration, demanda les auteurs, ce

This detail of the professional labour performed by Philidor, from 1775 to 1785, while a third of each year was spent with the London Chess-Club, presents the picture of a musician, still devoted to his art, who may have yielded something to the demands of advancing years and of threatening infirmity—something, perhaps, to the capricious exactions of a poetic constitution—when enabled to do so by the increase of his income from another source, but who never ceased to do full justice to his profession, his family, or himself.\* No loss of re-

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qui n'était pas encore arrivé à la *Comédie-Italienne*. Philidor eut cela de commun avec Voltaire, qui, le premier, avait reçu cet hommage au *Théâtre-Français*, à l'occasion de *Mérope*." (Castil-Blaze, *De l'Opéra*, t. i. p. 17.)]

\* Philidor in his last years suffered from gout. From a paltry anecdote of Grimm's—whose malicious gossip spared nobody—I should infer, that before 1785 Philidor's constitution had begun to be shaken. (*Correspondance*, t. iii. p. 362.)—That Philidor could no more obey Dr. Johnson's prescription to "work doggedly," without regard to mood or condition, than others, who produce by genial inspiration and not by talent alone—(just as Milton could compose only in winter, and Goethe could reduce to writing only what he had never spoken of to another)—appears from an early letter of his to Favart, written at a period (1763) when his success should have put him in the best of spirits.—"Monsieur, Depuis quinze jours, que j'ai votre poëme entre les mains, j'ai voulu essayer plusieurs fois y travailler, mais j'ai trop d'humeur et de chagrin pour avoir la tête tranquille. En conséquence, il ne m'est pas possible de me charger d'aucun ouvrage de théâtre. . . . Je ne puis m'accoutumer à une suite constante de découragement."

putation or of popularity had given him cause to abandon his art in disgust. And yet, M. Fétis assures us, that *Thémistocle* was Philidor's last opera; that after the composition of this piece, he ceased to work for the stage; and that he gave himself up, without reserve or restraint, to his passion for Chefs—spending the greater part of every day at the *Café de la Régence*. Were the facts really as stated by M. Fétis, they would by no means justify the harsh inference, which he must have expected his readers to draw from them. In his ignorance of Philidor's engagement with the London Club, he supposes him to have spent the whole of every year from 1779 to 1795 at Paris; and when he says, that Philidor abandoned music and spent his time in playing Chefs, he means to charge him with leaving his family to comparative destitution for the sake of a piece of self-indulgence, which under such circumstances would be absolutely criminal. Philidor *might* have played Chefs all day at *La Régence* without so entirely betraying the interests of his family. His salary from the London Club, his pension from the King, and his perquisites as a composer of operas always on the stage, would have furnished them with resources—if not abundant—yet adequate perhaps to their necessities. M. Fétis, however, is somewhat mistaken, even in his facts: Philidor did *not* cease, in 1785, to labour as a musi-

cian, nor even to write for the stage. We have Philidor's own authority, in Twiss's anecdotes, that in 1787 he composed *La belle Esclave*, and in 1789 *Le Mari comme il les faudrait tous*.\* By his correspondence it appears, that in 1789 he also produced a very elaborate composition for some celebration of the recovery of George III. from his first attack of insanity; and that in 1790 he was preparing to bring out, in London, a *Te Deum*.† It is by no means likely, that we have an absolutely complete account of *all* Philidor did as a composer, especially during the later period of his life, when he was less prominently before the public, than he had been in his youth; but we have fortunately enough to vin-

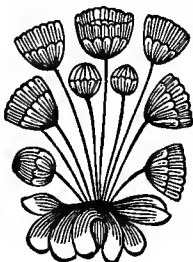
\* M. Fétis himself mentions *La belle Esclave* among the works of Philidor, but he avows himself unable to give the date.

† It appears from Philidor's letters, that the composition in question was an Ode in English, set to music at the request of Gallini, Director of the London Opera-house. The lively professional spirit, with which he expressed himself to his wife, while working at this task in old age, was worthy of his best years: "J'avance dans mon ouvrage, et je suis très content de mes idées. Je n'ai rien négligé, et j'ose dire, que j'ai fait l'impossible pour me mettre en peu de temps au fait de la prosodie et de l'accent de la langue anglaise. J'espère réussir, et je compte que je reviendrai avec tous mes brouillons de la totalité de mon ouvrage. J'ai la plus grande envie de prouver que la vieillesse ne m'a pas encore éteint le génie."—[I now think it probable, that the *Te Deum* may have been an old composition—the same which is mentioned in the *Mercur Français* for June, 1773, (p. 145,) as having been performed at the *Concert Spirituel* of that season.]

dicate him from the charge of even a venial dereliction of his duty. If the written record of his works had really ended abruptly—as it does with Fétis—in 1785, we should still feel the most entire assurance, that more had still been done—even until the last days of his life—by a musician, who, like Gluck, had grown higher in his professional aspirations as he had advanced in years, and whose self-sacrificing devotion to his family—the trait of character, which is especially treasured up in sacred remembrance by his descendants—must have always supplied him with motives for continually exerting his powers as a composer.\*

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\* The supposition is, besides, all but absurd, that such a father of a family—or even any man of sound mind, *without* a family—should play Chess *temperately* up to the age of fifty-five, and then suddenly become a Chess-*maniac*, deaf to all considerations of duty and propriety.





## CHAPTER VI.

### FRENCH REVOLUTION—PHILIDOR'S LAST VISIT TO ENGLAND—DEATH AND CHARACTER.

**M**EANWHILE the whirlpool of the Revolution was beginning to set in motion those fatal circles, which were destined to involve, with the rest, the feelings and interests of the harmless Chefs-player, now compassed about with years and infirmity. It is no discredit to Philidor, that he was, as his descendant has called him, “a man of *Eighty-Nine*” \*—that he sympathized warmly with the movement for the abolition of the old privileges and abuses, and

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\* It was “an hard saying” of the great New-England Judge, “*Tb'oph Parsons*,” (so called,) in reference to the men of his own time and place, who sympathized with the first promises of the French Revolution—“The man, who is *not* a Democrat at twenty, is a *knave*; the man, who *is* a Democrat at forty, is a *fool*.”—Artists and Poets are always under twenty. Philidor found himself in company with, not only artists and poets, philosophers and *savants*, but also with the best of the clergy, the untitled rural *curés*.



for the substitution of a limited monarchy in place of a despotism, which had now become even more contemptible than onerous. His sentiments are freely expressed in the last letters of his we have—those of 1790. By that time the Revolution, which had hitherto presented nothing but “a pleasant exercise of hope and joy” to minds like his, had, as he supposed, fairly completed its course—France was in possession of a good king as the head and centre of free institutions, and Philidor asked and wished for nothing more. He predicts in February, that before the month of July his country would have secured the admiring respect of the universe—lawsuits would be few or none, taxes would be reduced at least a third, and yet the interest of the public debt would be honestly paid. Nay, the very character of the nation would henceforth be changed; the education of the young would be quite other than it had been; people—*French* people—would meet to converse gravely and on grave subjects, and no longer waste time in frivolity and nonsense. He regrets, that, while he himself feels nothing but unutterable joy and patriotic pride, his first-born, our André, should not more fully sympathize with him; he is delighted, however, that his sons have been enrolled in the National Guard, and hopes that “his young soldiers” will do their duty. He alludes to Lafayette in terms to satisfy even a grateful

American, and suggests the propriety of raising an altar to the Bishop of Autun, better known as the faintly Charles Maurice Talleyrand. In short, these perfectly honest and homely utterances of Philidor to his wife, more than any high-wrought literary effort, make real to us the inconceivable fascination exerted upon the best men—men “who were strong in love”—by this first apparition of “Her that rose upon the banks of Seine,” before the civic wreath, wherewith she bound her temples, had betrayed “the breathings of her dragon crest.”\*

Philidor was slow to believe that the character of ferocity, which the movement soon began to

\* O pleasant exercise of hope and joy!  
For mighty the Auxiliars, which then stood  
Upon our side, we who were strong in love.

WORDSWORTH—*French Revolution.*

Who rises on the banks of Seine,  
And binds her temples with the civic wreath?  
What joy to read the promise of her mien!  
How sweet to rest her wide-spread wings beneath!

\* \* \* \*

But she through many a change of form hath gone,  
And stands amidst you now an armed creature,  
Whose panoply is not a thing put on,  
But the live scales of a portentous nature;  
That, having wrought its way from birth to birth,  
Stalks round—abhorred by Heaven, a terror to the Earth!

I marked the breathings of her dragon crest—

WORDSWORTH—*Ode.*

exhibit, was anything more than accidental and transient. He had had some experience of popular excitements in England—Lord George Gordon's Mob had filled London with much braying and some burning during one of his London seasons—and he looked for nothing worse from the wolfish gang of Marat: he was prepared for the demolition of a prison and a palace or two, but not for the cry of "*A la lanterne!*"—" *Parbleu, ma chère!* (he would say to his wife) they really mean to set Paris on fire by the four corners—give me my cane, and let me go and see." But it is evident, that Philidor saw and heard, at last, a good deal more than he liked. For towards the close of the year 1792—that is, after the blood of the September massacres had tainted the air of France—without waiting, as had been his wont to do, for the month of February to come, he made his way to England. He obtained a passport from the ruling authority of the time; and there is impressive evidence, that he never ranked himself with the enemies even of the revolutionary government of his country; but I have no doubt it was a wholesome fear of another "celebrated" *La Régence* player, and not the declaration of war by England after the execution of Louis, that prevented any attempt to return home during the years 1793 and 1794:—Maximilian Robespierre might have seen in him, not the harmless Chefs-

player, but the pensioner of two Kings and the favourite of a fugitive pretender to the crown.\* At all events, it must have been a matter of congratulation to his family, that during the Reign of Terror Philidor was not merely in safety, but also in the midst of the friends of twenty years. In all other respects, indeed, his situation was necessarily such as to prey constantly upon his spirits, and to weaken still more his enfeebled health.† He bore up under his afflictions, however, as he might, and frequented the Club as in happier days. He still proved at the board, that neither age nor disease had taken aught

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\* I think André Philidor good authority for his father's going to England before his usual time, and for his having obtained a passport—but not from the *Committee of Public Safety*, for that body, as known to history, was not constituted until April 6th, 1793. The inference from his going earlier than usual is not only fair and natural, but is also supported by current tradition, as given in Fétis and the *Palamède*. André makes the war the cause of his father's not attempting to return; but Philidor had gone to and fro, without let or hinderance, during three previous wars.—The *Palamède* and Mr. Walker preserve the tradition, that Robespierre was a Chefs-player and a regular frequenter of the *Café de la Régence*.—MONSIEUR (afterwards Louis XVIII.) was a member of the Paris Chefs-Club, and a subscriber to the *Analyse* of 1777. I have somewhere read, that he was also, on one occasion, an adversary of Philidor's in a blindfold match, and that he tried in vain to disconcert him by making a false move.

† He had accounted even his annual voluntary separation from his family an exile—"Enfin, voilà déjà un mois passé de mon *exil*; je voudrais être au bout de mes engagements, pour vivre avec toi." (*Letter*, Feb. 20th, 1788.)

from the strength of his play, and he still ventured, without danger, upon what Diderot had called the "perilous essay" of his blindfold matches. So late as February and March, 1794, when sixty-eight years old, the Turkish ambassador saw him, with admiration, conduct, the first time two, the second three, games at once—with the slight relief, which he sometimes allowed himself in later years, of having one of the three boards under his own eye.\*

At length the Reign of Terror had passed away—the last *fournée* of Fouquier-Tinville had fed the

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\* The preference of the Turkish ambassador, at these matches, appears to have emboldened his Interpreter—some lying Greek, I presume—to circulate the story, *after Philidor's death*, that, immediately subsequent to his last exhibition, in 1795, the Turk had invited him to his house, and, after having beaten him in six consecutive games, informed him, that there were several players in Constantinople, from whom he himself had to accept the Rook. I have no doubt of the falsehood; yet the story *might* be true, without damage to Philidor's reputation:—the pieces were strange and not easily distinguishable; and the game itself was not the European game of Chess—inasmuch, *e.g.*, as the *Queen* had the move of the *Knight*. (Twiss's *Miscellanies*, vol. ii. pp. 112–14.) Mr. Walker, while justly exploding this silly story, is a little unjust to Twiss; but Silberschmidt (*Lehrbuch*, p. 301) is perfectly glorious in his attempt to *outgreek* the genuine son of "*Græcia mendax*."—It was in like manner reported, (Twiss, *Chess*, vol. i. p. 188,) that Philidor had been beaten by Kempelen's Automaton, in 1783—another falsehood, which was still quite true; for Philidor, to favour the good baron's interests, played *alla Ganapierde*—he tried to get beaten and could not. He told André, who was with him at the time, that he had never played so fatiguing a game.

guillotine; and, by the opening of the year 1795, there was good prospect of a state of things, in which a quiet old man might reasonably hope for a natural death. To return to Paris, to breathe his last in the bosom of his family, was the one object, on which all the aspirations and all the efforts of Philidor were now concentrated. But when his friends at home made application, at the proper office of the new government, for the necessary safe-conduct, they found that Philidor was regarded as an *émigré*—a class held in peculiar abhorrence for their avowed sympathy, or personal co-operation, with the enemies and invaders of France. It was necessary to collect testimony, and to multiply applications to various Committees, in order to remove, if possible, the obstacle created by this fatal suspicion. Philidor, in the meanwhile, aware, it appears, of nothing but that his application was going through some not unusual process of official routine, still kept up heart and hope, and actually gave exhibitions at the Club in February and May. At length, however, either because he felt himself sinking, or more probably because he was in immediate expectation of receiving his passport, he announced by advertisement, that “by particular desire, and positively for the very last time, he would play, on Saturday, the 20th of June, at two o’clock precisely, three games at once against three good Chefs-players, two of them

without seeing either board, and the third on looking over the table." Mr. Atwood, the celebrated mathematician, was one of those players, and recorded the game in which he took part. The presence of Philidor is traced at the Club for a few days longer. On the 29th of June he played two games with Mr. Atwood at the odds of the Pawn and Two Moves, of which he lost one. Both of these games—with a reverent regard, no doubt, for the last efforts of the great master—were recorded by Mr. Atwood, and were printed from his manuscripts by Mr. Walker in 1835 for the first time. Philidor never visited the Club again. He was now made aware, that his passport had been refused, and that he was on the list of "suspected characters," or "persons who had been denounced by a Committee of French Informers." This sudden extinction of his one cherished hope, under circumstances to shut out, for him, all prospect of any change for the better, proved to be more than he could bear. "From this moment (in the words of the Obituary) he became the martyr of grief—his philosophy forsook him—his tears were incessant—and he sunk into the grave." He died on Monday, the 24th of August, 1795.\* The same affectionate notice gives

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\* It was a distressing circumstance, connected with Philidor's death, that the information, which reduced him to despair and made him an unresisting victim to his habitual infirmity, (the gout,) proved to be in

us the information, that "for the last two months, Philidor had been kept alive merely by art, and the kind attentions of an old and worthy friend. To the last moment of his existence, he enjoyed, though near seventy years of age, a strong retentive memory,

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so far unfounded, that his family finally succeeded in procuring the safe-conduct for him, just in time to learn, that it had come too late.—It is singular, that so many dates should have been assigned to the death of Philidor. The *European Magazine*, e.g., gives the 28th of August; La Bourdonnais, (in his *Palamède* biography,) the 29th; Fétis, (after Choron and Fayolle, I suppose,) the 30th; and the *Gentleman's Magazine*—nay, André Philidor himself—the 31st. Several of these authorities kindly allow Philidor a day or two for reading his own Obituary before taking his departure. La Bourdonnais should have been correct, for he had Walker's *Biographical Sketch* before his eyes; but, unhappily, his author had introduced the Obituary by saying: "On Saturday, August 29th, the public were informed of the death of this unrivalled Chefs-player"—and the lazy translator, conceiving he had got his date already, spared himself the trouble of reading any farther. The notice in the *European Magazine* contains only three or four lines; it is ten years out in Philidor's age; and is evidently, therefore, the work of one who *knew* as little as he *cared* about the matter. The only real authority—and it is perfectly satisfactory—is the Obituary, which appeared in the London newspapers, on Saturday, August 29th. None of those papers are within my reach; but Twiss, whom I follow, (*Miscellanies*, vol. ii. p. 110,) furnishes good proof, that he had the original newspaper document before his eyes, and that he copied it accurately, viz., he gives the day of the *week*, as well as the day of the *month*, of *both* dates—that of Philidor's death, and that of the newspaper, which contained the Obituary. One French author, the Comte de Baffertot, (in his very interesting *Traité élémentaire*, p. 48,) and the always accurate German *Schachzeitung*, (vol. ii. p. 36,) give the true date.



which long rendered him remarkable in the circle of his acquaintances; and he was a man of those meek qualities, that rendered him not less esteemed as a companion, than admired for his extraordinary skill.”\*

The tribute thus paid to the memory of Philidor was evidently the expression of sincere respect and regret. The Club, of which he had been for more than twenty years a member, suspended their meetings for some time after his death, “as a mark of respect to the immortal name of Philidor.” So we are informed by Mr. Walker.† I wish he had not added, that “it was disgraceful to them, that no funeral tablet was erected, to point out the place of his rest.” I wish he had not charged “the great, the noble, the wealthy” patrons of Philidor with suffering him to die, “almost literally in a garret, deprived of those comforts, which soothe down the asperities of utter destitution.”‡ Mr. Walker is,

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\* In this paragraph I have compared and reconciled, as well as I could, André Philidor’s statement and the Obituary in Twiss’s *Miscellanies*, vol. ii. pp. 110–12. From the letters of Mme George Sand’s father, in her *Mémoires*, it appears that André had some influence with the revolutionary authorities, even during the Reign of Terror. It is Twiss (*ut supra*) that gives Philidor’s last advertisement.—Mr. Atwood’s MS. notes were published in Mr. Walker’s “*Selection of Games actually played by Philidor*.” London, 1835.

† “*Selection of Games*,” p. 61.

‡ “*Chefs without the board*,” in Walker’s *Chefs and Chefs-players*, p. 127. (From *Fraser’s Magazine* for March, 1840.)

indeed, entitled—by his uniform zeal for the glory of Philidor, and by his own noble conduct in the case of La Bourdonnais\*—to visit with indignant censure any real neglect of the dying master by the English Club; but I am bound to say, in justice to an honourable association of gentlemen, that I believe the charge of such neglect to be entirely unfounded. The charge is made by Mr. Walker alone, and is based solely (so far as appears) upon oral tradition† collected by himself. The facts so ascertained amount to precisely three more than *he*

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\* La Bourdonnais came to London, in the last stages of a dropy, late in November, 1840. It was presently ascertained, that he was on the point of being ejected from the garret, to which he had been compelled to retreat. A Committee of English Chess-players, of whom Mr. Walker was one, subscribed a hundred pounds, within half an hour, for the relief of the suffering stranger. They removed him to comfortable lodgings; procured medical assistance; and bestowed every kind of attention upon him until his death. They attended the funeral in a body, and placed over his grave a stone, with the inscription—*LOUIS-CHARLES DE LA BOURDONNAIS, the celebrated Chess-player, died December 13th, 1840, aged 43.* Nor did they pause in their noble work, until they had raised a large sum for Madame La Bourdonnais herself. It is a pleasure to renew the record of such acts as these.

† How uncertain any Chess-tradition is may be inferred from that of the *Café de la Régence*, on which M. Fétis relied, and by which he was misled. I must add, that the English tradition, on which Mr. Walker relies, is still more suspicious, because it betrays a partisan *animus*. It probably came to him through some Chess-player, whose social position or political opinions led him either to invent facts, or to interpret harmless real facts, to the injury of a Club composed, to a great extent, of “the great, the noble, and the wealthy.”

had learned, as well as we, from the newspaper Obituary; and it is curious to observe, how completely this enthusiastic writer has magnified the real weight of these facts—for such readers, especially, as have never learned to make allowance for the *furor irlandese*\*—by the redundant vehemence of the figurative language, in which he envelopes them. They *appear* to prove, that the gentlemen of the Club left Philidor to die in a garret; that the “old and worthy friend,” who saved him from dying absolutely alone, “supported” him, with no assistance from them; and that they took no thought for his funeral, any more than for his monument. M. St. Amant, accordingly, clothing the impression he had thus received in a vesture as flowery as his author’s, holds up to his countrymen the wretched picture of Philidor’s “pauper-like condition,” and of his “death in a garret.”† But Mr. Walker *really* says

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\* When the Italians adopted the term *furor francese* to denote a model madness, they probably had not extended their observations beyond the continent.

† That is, Mr. Walker speaks of “the asperities of utter destitution” in such exciting terms, that M. St. Amant understands this quite unappropriated “utter destitution” to be the “état voisin de la pauvreté” of Philidor in particular; and, the pathos of the “*almost* literally in a garret” being entirely too overwhelming to permit the tender-hearted Frenchman to recognise the existence of the trifling limitary particle, he speaks of the English Committee, in the case of La Bourdonnais, as “recollecting [*quite* literally] the garret of Philidor.” (*Palamède-St. Amant*, t. i. pp. 16, 17.)

only that Philidor “died *almost* literally in a garret” —which, being interpreted, clearly means, that Philidor did *not* die in a garret at all.\* Of the remaining two traditionary facts, Mr. Walker appears not to have reflected, that the one completely neutralizes the other:—the fact, that the members of the Club took immediate cognizance of the death of their beloved master, by a very unusual act of official mourning, makes it utterly preposterous to infer from the fact of their failing to erect a tablet to his memory, that they had taken no thought of his sufferings or his wants on his death-bed. The assertion, that the dying old man was “chiefly indebted for *support* to the assiduities of one kind friend,” is a very careless deviation from the lan-

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\* It is not pretended, that Philidor—after having occupied better lodgings until his sickness—was then obliged (and was suffered by his English friends) to retire to his “almost a garret,” and that there was therefore the same reason for removing him, as existed in the case of poor La Bourdonnais. For all that appears, he died in the same modest quarters, which he had chosen to live in during his last residence in London. If they were less expensive, than he had been wont to occupy, it was undoubtedly because the anxious circumstances, under which he was now living there, made every kind of economy both necessary and becoming. He was to meet the expense, not of a four months’, but of an indefinitely long, residence in a foreign city. His pension was gone—probably his theatrical perquisites, besides. His family would need anything he could possibly economize from his London salary and other earnings. Self-denial and economy of this kind might be carried far, without involving any such distress, as would attract or require the attention of his friends.

guage of the Obituary:—Philidor was “*kept alive* for the last two months merely by *art*, and by the *kind attentions* of an old and worthy friend;” but there is nothing whatever in *these* words to justify what appears to be Mr. Walker’s construction, that the kind friend *supported the expense* of what was done for Philidor, “to keep him alive,” either by medical art or otherwise.

If, therefore, the charges of Mr. Walker against the English Club are far from being sustained even by the traditionary facts, which he himself adduces, still less able are they to stand their ground against the strong presumptive evidence, that can be brought in conflict with them. For twenty years, the gentlemen of the Club had shown the most delicate and systematic attention to the pecuniary interests and personal comforts of Philidor. While their number had been decreasing, they had kept up his salary. They had anticipated his wants by advancing their subscriptions.\* They had arranged and

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\* We know, (*Letter*, February, 1790,) that on one occasion, certainly—and probably often or always—Count Brühl and General Conway paid Philidor their quota (a large proportion, too) of his salary, immediately on his arrival in England, and long before the subscription was opened in the Club.—[The Rev. Mr. Pruen’s *Introduction to the History and Study of Chess* (p. 30) confirms what I have already said, (*antè*, p. 78,) that Philidor had the opportunity (evidently with the sanction and encouragement of the Club) to earn a good deal by playing as an instructor. His stake (understood to be a tuition-fee) was a crown a game.]

patronised frequent blindfold exhibitions in order to increase his income. Count Brühl had reduced his London expenses a full half, by making him a daily guest at his table—a step, which he would not have resorted to, if his feeling towards him had not come to be that of sincere personal friendship. Such appears to have been the habitual conduct of the members of the Club towards Philidor up to the last day of his presence among them; and we have seen how entirely consistent with such conduct was their official action immediately after his death. Is it, then, within the bounds of possible belief, that for solely and precisely the two months, which elapsed between these two dates, these same kind, considerate, and attentive friends should have become unkind, inconsiderate, and inattentive to the same old man, under circumstances to make the withholding of any possible kindness, considerateness, and attention mere barbarity?\*

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\* Another consideration, which has great weight with me, I do not introduce into the text, because it is merely negative—viz., the papers of André Philidor do not betray the slightest knowledge of any such neglect of his father. Yet, as the family immediately received such details of Philidor's last illness, as could not have been learned from the Obituary, it is reasonable to suppose, that the communication came from one, who must also have known—if the fact were really so—that “one old friend” had been compelled to bear every expense, and perform every kind office, required by the occasion, because those, who had so long professed to be the friends of the great Chess-player,

For my own part, I believe nothing of the kind. I do not entertain the slightest doubt, that the "old and worthy friend" was in communication with the gentlemen of the Club, and that he was enabled to perform his pious office, even to the last rites of sepulture, by means, which they supplied. If the Obituary passes over what *they* did, to record the personal devotion of that one old friend, it is probably because the Obituary itself was prepared by one of their own number. It is true, his former associates set up no tablet to his memory\*—an omis-

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had barbarously deserted him. If the informant were cognizant of such a fact, he could hardly have forborne to disclose it, so far, at least, as was necessary, in order to do full justice to the "old friend;" the impression thus left in the family could not have been forgotten, nor would it have been suppressed by the son in preparing a biography of his father.—The silence of Twiss is also of some weight. He had had little to do with Philidor, it is true, after 1787; but if he was fond enough of malicious gossip to record the victories of the Turkish ambassador, he could hardly have failed to know or preserve so bad a trait of character as the unfeeling conduct of the English Club.

\* That is to say, I *accept* it as true, on Mr. Walker's mere word, rather than to be always disputing him, or impertinently calling upon him to prove a negative. But what if Mr. Walker himself has thought better of his denying the existence of a monument? He did, indeed, make that denial, in 1835, in so many words; but, in 1840, he merely says, "Philidor passed from life in such obscurity, that I have never yet been able to discover the spot where he was buried." (*Chefs and Chefs-players*, p. 127.) If this position be really a substitute for the earlier one, the denial of the monument is, of course, given up; for Mr. Walker's inability to find the cemetery, in which Philidor was

sion not regretted by one alone of Philidor's biographers ; but the inference, that those, who failed to do all they might have done *after* his death, had failed to do anything for him while dying, is warranted neither by sound reason nor by actual experience :—it has often happened, that where a sincere feeling of regret, and even of gratitude, has prompted the tribute of an act of piety like this, the execution of the purpose falls through from causes, that cannot fairly be said to involve either reproach or disgrace.

The connection of Philidor with the English Club is without a parallel in the history of Chefs : it exhibits a picture of Chefs-talent and of personal merit so perfectly appreciated and so honourably rewarded, as to reflect equal credit upon the noble patrons and upon the subject of their patronage. For the honour of human nature, such a picture should not wantonly be marred or defaced. I have not, therefore, thought it at all out of place to subject to the severest test of critical examination the traditionary charge, which would make the life

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buried, would as well prove that he had no grave, as that his grave had no stone, and that he did not die at all, as that he died in obscurity. We do not usually conceive of that departure as an obscure one, which is immediately followed by the protracted adjournment of a society of distinguished men, and to the announcement of which half a column is devoted in the leading weekly newspapers.



of Philidor to have closed under circumstances to embitter tenfold the chalice, which he was doomed to drink in solitude and in exile, to the endless disgrace of men, for whom otherwise we could entertain no other sentiments, than those of peculiar respect and gratitude. I wish I might hope, that every reader is as fully satisfied as I am, that the charge is a calumny.\*

It may seem quite unnecessary, after presenting so much of biographical detail; that speaks for itself, to keep the hand still upon the tablet, in an attempt to delineate the character of Philidor. Where, however, the biographer has been labouring to restore to all its rights a name, to which some injustice has been done, he may be indulged by the good-natured reader, in a few words more, than what is merely enough. Philidor has too long been an object of living interest to the Chefs-player alone, and to him solely as a Chefs-player. But to me no part of my theme has been more attractive, than that which invited me to search carefully into all the evidences of what my hero aspired to do, and what he accom-

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\* In a letter received after the preceding sheet had been printed, Mr. Lewis (the eminent English Chefs-author and player) kindly answered some inquiries of mine, by saying: "Who 'the old and worthy friend' was, I know not. I always understood from Sarratt, that a Mr. Crawford, a very rich man, patronised Philidor, taking a lesson—or being *supposed* to take a lesson—daily, and giving him *carte blanche* to dinner, whenever it suited him."

plished, as a Musician. It has been matter of serious gratification to me to be able to show, that the most celebrated of all Chefs-players treated the game as a game, and not as a profession; and that he reserved all the activity of the best years of his life for his noble Art. For this Philidor would deserve our respect, even if his honourable industry had procured him nothing more than his daily bread—if it had produced no works of more than temporary interest—if it had won him no place among those, whose names the world “does not willingly let die.” But such was not the case. The name of Philidor must live, in the History of Music, even if all his works must perish. All the authors of French musical history, from La Borde, through Castil-Blaze and Fétis, down to Poissot, unite in declaring, that Philidor sustained the leading part in the work of founding the most thoroughly national of all his country’s musical entertainments, the *Opéra-Comique*.\* Nor can the reform of the serious opera ever be mentioned, without doing Philidor the justice of having been the first and only composer, that achieved a success, which

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\* Fétis says, (*Curiosités*, p. 358,) in reference to Philidor’s coöperation with Monsigny in creating the *Opéra-Comique*, “L’autre (Philidor) possédait plus de science musicale que tous ses compatriotes.”—Castil-Blaze, (*De l’Opéra*, t. i. p. 33,)—after speaking of the earlier French composers—adds, “Si l’on excepte PHILIDOR et M. Goffec, aucun n’avait cette science profonde, ce style grandiose, qui commandent l’admiration dans tous les pays.”

could be perfected and made durable by no gentler agencies than the energetic genius, the iron will, and the terrific *bâton* of Gluck.

No composer creates or reforms a department of the Lyric Drama by dint of mere talent and musical science. Without, therefore, claiming for Philidor an equality with the five or six Immortals of the art, it is safe to assert, that he possessed Genius, and that too of a high order. We cannot, to be sure, appeal for the proof to the living utterances of the concert-room or the stage. But we can produce witnesses, whose competency cannot be called in question. Grétry, his contemporary, puts Philidor side by side even with Gluck himself, for "force of harmonic expression."\* Fétis, at the same time the Nestor and the Corypheus of living musical critics, awards to the works of Philidor a peculiar stamp of originality. And both of these high authorities ascribe to him a characteristic mark of genius,—the disposition and the capacity to invent new means of expression. One instances his new orchestral effects; the other, original combinations of rhythm.†

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\* *Mémoires*, (1829,) t. i. p. 157. "Si les musiciens de nos jours étaient jugés par l'esprit qui caractérisait les anciens, l'on nommerait Gluck et Philidor, pour la force de l'expression harmonique."

† *Anti*, p. 47, and the foot-notes pp. 65-67. I add here the words of some additional authorities. Fétis says of *Thémistocle*, much as he had said of *Ernelinde*, "Cet ouvrage est remarquable . . . par la nouveauté des formes de l'instrumentation."—The earlier opera-composers

Nor is it the case, that French critics are thus loud in their testimony, while all "the rest is silence." The German school, which may assuredly claim such richness of production as to tempt a disdain for what foreign schools have brought forth, has recognised the singular merit of Philidor, in a spirit of just and dignified appreciation, that might well have been imitated by some of his own countrymen. While Frenchmen have been found mean enough to charge one of the most single-minded and honest of men with systematic plagiarism, the highest German authorities have distinctly avowed, that Philidor stood by himself, a century ago, in working in the spirit of their own later masters; that not only are his scores studied (as they deserved to be) by every young composer, that would see real music separated from all that is trivial and temporary, but that remarkable evidence of such study has been given by the close reproduction of some of his beauties by a dramatic

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(according to Castil-Blaze and Fétis) had no *Finales* or larger combinations of voices: "Cependant PHILIDOR (Fétis, *La Musique mise à la portée*, etc. p. 160) saisit l'occasion qui lui fut offerte dans *Tom Jones* pour faire un bon Quatuor."—Grétry (Letter in the *Mercurie Français*, 1795) writes,—“Musicien profond, c'est lui qui le premier fit entendre sur la scène française les accens mélodieux des Italiens joints à la force de l'harmonie et du génie des Allemands . . . Philidor est, je crois, l'inventeur des morceaux de musique à plusieurs sujets où à plusieurs rythmes contractans. Le duo de *Tom Jones*, ‘*Que les devoirs que tu m'imposes*,’ est le chef-d'œuvre des morceaux de ce genre.”

composer of their own, who in original creative power ranks second to none.\*

If the Operas of Philidor no longer form part of any current repertory, it is simply because an audience of the day demands to be spoken to in the language and spirit of the day, with the multiplied and novel appliances of the day. The orchestra of Philidor, a startling and novel one for the old *Foire S. Laurent*, would appear thin and tame by the side of the "flutes and trumpets" of the actual *Opéra-Comique*. But although the tide of fashion, that swept away all second-rate productions at once, had begun to set in even before Philidor's death, such was the native charm of his lighter works, that they continued to flourish on the stage, as fresh as ever, so late as the

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\* "Philidor won for himself a reputation, which—in the minds of such as really understand the subject—can never be lost; for his works are (to say all in one word) full of *German* strength and solidity. In *Blaise* and his other operas, there lives a *German* spirit; and it is for this reason, that they have been the models of some of our most successful composers. An *amalgam* with our Carl Maria von Weber is very distinctly visible in a duet of *Tom Jones* and one in *Der Freischütz*, viz.: *Que les devoirs que tu m'imposes!* and *Halt! halt fest!* Place them side by side, and the fact will be demonstrated; the interval of more than half a century vanishes, both for feeling and for sight. The operas of Philidor are given, and received with applause, in every part of Europe; and are industriously studied by all such young composers as make it their aim to cut loose from every kind of *sing-song* and *cling-clang*." (Schindler's *Universal Lexicon der Tonkunst*, Stuttgart, 1837.)

days of the First Napoleon.\* Fétis, writing in 1841, affirms, that *Le Maréchal Ferrant* had then been produced in Paris more than two hundred times.†

But, of course, it is as a Chefs-player, that Philidor holds a place among the privileged few, whose claim to be the *Primarii*—"the foremost men of all the world," in their respective spheres—has been settled by an action, on the part of their fellow-men, as authoritative as it is indefinable—by a tacit admission of supremacy, a general and spontaneous act of homage. In his own day he stood, in the opinion of the actual Chefs-world, absolutely alone. Whatever may have been the strength in play of the contemporary theorists, Ercole del Rio, Ponziani, and Lolli, it was proved only in a peculiar school and exhibited on an unknown stage: it had no effect, therefore, out of the Peninsula, to suggest the slightest doubt of the supremacy of Philidor. There was nothing, consequently, to hinder the conviction of Philidor's unique position from passing beyond the circle of Chefs-players into the world without—from being

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\* *Antè*, p. 46.—See also Scudo, *Critique* etc. t. ii. p. 474.—When La Bourdonnais, writing so late as 1836, (*Biographie*), says, that all of Philidor's operas were forgotten, he excepts *le Maréchal ferrant*.—For a very interesting analysis of the *Maréchal ferrant*, see the article of M. Pougin already referred to (*antè*, p. 84.)

† We have Lardin's authority for the fact, that the compositions of Philidor were still (1841) treated as models, and given out as subjects of study, in the celebrated *Conservatoire* of Paris.

universally recognised as a fixed and indisputable dogma, an immutable tradition. As such it appears, everywhere, among the received commonplaces of works of literature and science. The name of Philidor stands out, in the general opinion, as distinctly from other names, as does that of Newton. It has acquired a sacredness, that may have had its effect upon the judgments of the Chefs-critics of a later day. In France, La Bourdonnais and St. Amant did but conform to the universal feeling, when they habitually spoke of Philidor as their "Master," "the Great Master," "the Master of us all."\* The very able English editor and critic of his book and of his games, George Walker, has everywhere, and in the most emphatic terms, characterized Philidor as "the greatest Chefs-player that ever lived—the founder of a school, which has proved itself second to none—the head of a dynasty, which has included a Carlier, a Bernard, a Deschapelles, a La Bourdonnais." Nay, herein Mr. Walker does but echo the equally decisive but calmer language of his illustrious friend,

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\* It is true, that La Bourdonnais—after having called Philidor (*Palamède*, t. i. p. 392) "le joueur le plus extraordinaire qui ait jamais paru"—argued, in a conversation with the Chevalier de Barneville, that he could have given Philidor the Pawn and Two Moves (*La Régence*, 1851, p. 118.) But, for La Bourdonnais's sake, it may be well to recollect, that he was, perhaps, (as usual,) merely joking, and that we have the anecdote upon the authority of M. Méry.

Alexander M'Donnell himself.\* Many of the foremost Chefs-writers have not hesitated, either directly or by implication, to express the further opinion, that he, who had certainly never met his equal, in his own day, would have undoubtedly sustained the same unique position, were he to have found himself seated opposite to the adepts, whose names have, since his day, shone with so bright a lustre in the Chefs-empyrean.†

Of all Chefs-writers, he who is confessedly the first in our own day, and second to none that have ever been, has shared less than most others that awe for the Great Shade, which may have influenced the opinions and the expressions of La Bourdonnais and St. Amant, of Walker and M'Donnell. Herr VON HEYDEBRAND UND DER LASA has scrutinized such monuments, as we have, of Philidor's practical skill, with the same "judicial composure," the same absolute fairness, that characterize his critique of the *Analyse*. The result will be found in the second section of the Essay, with which he has

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\* "I am very anxious to see the Philidor MS. *Philidor* is my favourite; and I prize whatever remains of him." (Autograph Letter to Mr. Walker, in my possession.)

† I may cite, for example, a clever writer in the *Quarterly Review* (No. CLXIX, June, 1849, p. 94): "At the risk of being deemed either old-fashioned or ignorant, we must plead guilty to a conclusion less flattering to modern professors. We believe, on the evidence of Philidor's recorded games, that on the whole he has had no superior."



enriched this book of mine. If the reader should, at first, find his enthusiasm disagreeably chilled by the absence of those warm expressions of admiration, with which others—such as George Walker and I—invest all mention of our Chefs-hero, he will, in the end, be better satisfied, that the received opinion rests on a sure basis, when he hears so cool a critic, so high an authority, declare his judgment, that there was *no* given measure of practical skill, which Philidor, in his best days, could not have made his own. Forever, therefore, let the Star of Philidor dwell apart. Let us accord to La Bourdonnais and to our own PAUL MORPHY the credit of having attained an actual height, in Chefs-skill, that had never been attained before ; but let us, by no such recognition of later and contemporary greatness, detract aught from the consecrated supremacy of Philidor.

No words are required to show what Philidor was as a man. With even such scanty details as we have of his private life, we feel that we need nothing more. We read him like a fairly written book. The sun never shone upon a human being more perfectly simple, single-hearted, and open. He loved his art for itself. He therefore felt no jealousy of Monigny, no envy of Gluck. He could, with equal sincerity, mourn the departure of Rameau, and welcome the rising star of Grétry. As

his English friends, after his death, dwelt upon what they had witnessed—his meekness and gentleness, his disinterestedness and his probity ; so Grétry, with more perfect knowledge of what he had been at home, honoured him as a good husband, a good father, a good friend. It would be hard to believe, that such a man could have adopted, as a companion to such virtues, the wicked and ferocious irreligion of his time. With no evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to cherish the belief, that he had never abandoned the faith and the impressions of his earliest training, in daily association, as it was, with the most sacred offices of religion ; and that he was not without the consolations of religion at his death. And, therefore, if those, who delight to honour his memory, may not be able to read, on any sepulchral stone, the “forlorn *Hic jacet*” of Philidor, they may at least waft after him a devout *Requiescat in pace* !





# PHILIDOR

AS

CHESS-AUTHOR AND CHESS-PLAYER

CONTRIBUTED TO

THE LIFE OF PHILIDOR

AS A SUPPLEMENT

BY

TASSILO VON HEYDEBRAND UND DER LASA

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CHESS



The following Essay was written at Rio Janeiro, in the winter of 1858-59, during the author's residence in that capital as *Chargé d'affaires* of the King of Prussia. It was sent to me in the original German, for translation, with the request that I would add to it Notes of my own. If the reader knew, as well as I do, with what force and propriety Herr von der Lasa expresses himself in our language, he would regret that the original had not been written in English at once. He will, at any rate, think none the worse of my taste for limiting my Notes to a few references or illustrations.

G. A.



## PHILIDOR

AS CHESS-AUTHOR AND CHESS-PLAYER.

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**I**N the following Essay, which is offered as a Supplement to the *Life of PHILIDOR*, it is proposed to discuss the merit, which the *Analyse* may possess, as a work of Chess-theory, and to attempt some estimate of the Chess-skill of its author, in comparison—so far, at least, as such comparison is admissible or practicable—with that of later and contemporary players.

### I.

PHILIDOR AS CHESS-AUTHOR.

**P**HILIDOR was indebted for his world-wide celebrity, not solely to his superiority in actual play over those of his contemporaries, whom he met over the board, but also as well to his personal relations with many men of high rank and distinction, as to the

wide circulation, which his *Analyse* attained, as the compendium of what was, in that age, known of Chefs-play, outside of Italy. Of all French Chefs-authors, Philidor is the only one, whose work has made an epoch in the history of the game. No other production, in all Chefs-literature, has been so frequently reprinted, both in the original French, and in most of the languages of modern Europe. We recognise in it, at once, the production of a comprehensive mind, still bearing marks of youthful exuberance, but endowed with a rare talent for the clear exhibition of its ideas. The work has been judged of very differently by different critics. Those who pay an exclusive homage to a system, identical with that of the *Analyse*, have certainly rated its value too high. Others—Ponziani, for example—who have directed their attention to the *openings*, with little or no reference to the subsequent prosecution of the game, have as evidently rated it too low. Philidor himself was full of confidence in his own capacity and in the value of his treatise. In the Preface to his first edition, he speaks<sup>7</sup> slightly enough of “*Le Calabrois*” and of Bertin—of the “big volume” of Carrera, wherein the good priest affirms, that the checkmate by Rook and Bishop against Rook is a forced one, without being able (Philidor intimates) to give the moves—and of the artificial Positions, which could not occur in actual play so often as once in a thousand years. His own principal object (he continues) is to deserve commendation by a novelty, of which nobody before him had ever thought or perhaps been capable, namely, to teach, by means of entire games, the proper

mode of playing the Pawns. "The Pawns" (he says) "are the *Soul* of Chefs;" and it is upon the good or bad playing of the Pawns, that the winning or the losing of the game entirely depends. This rather petulant Introduction—wherein the author rejects, with mockery and sarcasm, the doctrine, that a Pawn can become a second Queen (although at a later day he accepted it)—was quietly dropt in the edition of 1777, and replaced by a shorter one.

Philidor's treatise embraced, in its first edition of 1749, only nine games, with their variations. Of these games four are *Common*, viz.:—No. I. is the *King's Bishop's Game*; No. II. the *Queen's Bishop's Pawn's Defence* in the King's Bishop's Game; No. III. *Philidor's Defence* in the King's Knight's Game; and No. IV. is the *Queen's Bishop's Pawn's Game*. After these follow *Gambits*, viz., the *King's Gambit Proper*; the *Cunningham Gambit*; the *Bishop's Gambit*; the *King's Gambit declined*; and then the *Queen's Gambit*—a game especially commended by Stamma, and which Philidor—with evident reference to this circumstance—calls the *Aleppo Gambit*. There is also thrown into the bargain, as it were, a certain checkmate with Rook and Bishop against Rook, which, however, although a model of clear and precise analysis, does not entirely demonstrate the assertion of Carrera. The specimens of play, which Philidor furnished, in his first edition, were designed chiefly to give the Chess-student a clue to guide him safely through the *middle* of the game. Few as they are in number, only the four first, even of these, were looked upon by him, as calculated to

illustrate his system. The study of such a collection, therefore, must be entirely insufficient for conveying a knowledge of the *openings*. For this reason, the author, in his second edition (1777)—which repeats without change all the moves of the first, with only here and there a modification of the notes—adds a few short openings, at the close. It is much to be regretted, that during the interval between his two editions, Philidor had not come to know the three great Masters, who at that time were flourishing in Modena. A meeting with Ercole del Rio, the most celebrated of the three, would not only have produced games of peculiar interest, as being contests between the representatives of two different systems, but would also naturally have exerted a powerful influence upon the aims and labours of theorists on both sides of the Alps. But this great event the Chefs-world was not permitted to see.

Philidor's edition of 1777 is, therefore, even in its additional matter, penetrated by the same spirit as the earlier one. The *Games*, with the instructive *Notes* appended to them, still form the staple of the work. These constitute the exposition of a peculiar system, the characteristic features of which, contrasted with those of the Italian school, I have endeavoured to give, in an essay of some length, contributed to the Berlin *Schachzeitung* for 1847 and 1848. It can hardly be possible, that these model Games ever occurred in actual play; they were, undoubtedly, composed by Philidor himself for his work. They are distinctively characterized by the thoroughly consequent and systematic style of their Pawn-play, and



by the manner in which they make use of the central Pawns to secure closeness of position. They cannot, however, be said to have been constructed upon principles absolutely new; they are, more properly, the offspring of the prevailing theories of the day—theories that were based far more upon the games of Lopez, (of whose work there had been several editions in French,) than upon those of Greco, in which the spirit of the Italian school was decidedly preponderant. The little book of the Englishman Bertin (1735,) and Stamma's *Openings* (1745,) do in fact belong to the same school as the *Analyse*: what Philidor did was to perfect and expound the *system* of that school. When we examine the work in this light—taking into account also the youthful years of the author in 1749—it is impossible not to concede to Philidor a precocious mastery of all the recondite subtleties of the game, and an extraordinary gift of exhibiting his ideas in a clear and comprehensive plan. The mark which Philidor aimed at was high and worthy of a great master. And yet he would hardly have ventured upon the execution of the task he had proposed to himself, if he had been fully aware how wide a field was really embraced by it—if he had not, like his contemporaries, restricted his observation to the one-sided “Pawn game” alone. Nevertheless the *Analyse*—even in the shape wherein it first appeared, in 1749—abundantly proves that its author possessed a remarkable talent for dealing with the science of the game. This is a gift, which many other great players have not possessed. I do not prove this by instancing in the celebrated, but

weak, *Traité des Amateurs*, because I do not consider that work to have been produced by "great players," of a class to compare with Philidor. But La Bourdonnais is a case in point. Although endowed with the very highest order of genius for the practice of the game, he has left behind him, in his theoretical work, only a very middling sort of compilation.\* I may cite also Deschappelles, another Hero of the later age, from whom, as an antagonist in play, La Bourdonnais acquired much of his skill. That great player never gave himself the slightest trouble about the theory of the game; nay, he rated Chess-science so low, that when a move proposed by himself, in one of the famous correspondence-games with Pesth, was objected to, on grounds of Chess-theory, as not the strongest, he could think of no better way to decide the difference between Chess-science and himself, than to challenge the entire Committee to play out the rest of the game with him, over the board, for a wager. He immediately resigned his place in the Committee, when they declined accepting this singular *cartel*.

The *Analyse* contains many propositions, asserted by Philidor with too much confidence in 1749, which, at maturer years, he was not disposed to maintain, and therefore discarded in his second edition. The fact, however, that he had once asserted such propositions, continued, even after he had withdrawn them, to affect prejudicially his authority as a theorist. To these in-

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\* "Le pauvre La Bourdonnais et son pauvre livre!" "Détestable compilation!" are some of the flowers scattered by M. le Viceroy St. Amant upon the *Nouveau Traité* of his Sovereign.—TR.

stances of youthful rashness belong the unfounded censure, which he pronounced, in 1749, upon the *King's Knight's Game*, the favourite opening of the Italians,—the Notes on the third move in the Second Game, (*Queen's Bishop's Pawn's Defence* in the King's Bishop's Game,) with the illustrative First Back-game, and the Notes on the opening moves of the Fourth Game—Notes, from which it might be inferred, that Philidor (like Carrera, 1617, p. 74) held the opinion, that to have the first move was to win the game. On the other hand, if we find these few untenable precepts in the *Analyse*, we also find Notes, which enunciate very striking general propositions, and Games decided by moves well thought through, and universally recognised to be the strongest. At the same time, there is no lack, either in the openings, or in the subsequent moves, of such oversights, as we can account for, only by supposing, that the author gave more attention to the general character and main tendency of the games, than to the analytical accuracy of each move. How otherwise—to cite only one example—can we account for it, that Philidor should play out to the advantage of Black, the position in which his Cunningham-Gambit game stands after the 29th move of Black, in the Second Variation?\*

He had taken sides with Black, and therefore remarks, (in reference to this Position, on which he bestows par-

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\* The Position is: WHITE—King at KR; Rook at QB7; Bishops at K3 and QR4; Knight at KB; Pawns at Q4, QKt5, and QR3. BLACK—King at KKt3; Rook at Q2; Bishop at K3; Knight at K2; Pawns at KR4, KKt4, K5, Q4, QKt2, and QR2.

ticular attention,) that White would lose, just as well, were he even to avoid the exchange of Rooks. Philidor pursues the game as follows :\* (WHITE) 30. R : R, (BLACK) B : R ; and thereupon continues with 31. K Kt2, KRP on ; 32. QB KB2, K KR4 ; 33. KB Q†, B covers ; instead of allowing White to make the decisive move, 31. QKtP on. Without stirring the question who was the author of this move, it is sufficient for my present purpose to say, that it is mentioned in Walker's edition of the *Analyse*, 1832.†

But I will here repeat the earlier moves of this Gambit, in order to attach to them a few notes, and to invite

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\* It being obviously necessary to substitute, for the "algebraic" notation employed by the author, one more familiar to English and American Chess-players, I have adopted substantially that which appears in the later publications of George Walker, partly because three of the games, cited in the Essay, were copied from Walker's *Selection*, and partly because I do myself prefer Walker's to any other form of descriptive notation, as being the most compendious reproduction of the real language of Chess-players over the board. For the convenience of the printer, I have made the slight change of adopting from German Chess-books a colon (:) as equal to "takes," and the dagger (†) for "checks" or "checking."—Ta.

† Walker's note is, "You may now get a fine game, e. g., 31. QKtP on, B QB3 ; 32. P : P, QKtP2 ; 33. KB : P, B QR ; 34. Kt Kt3, and ought to win." The move 31. QKtP on appears first (so far as I know) in Pratt's *Studies of Chess*, 1810, vol. ii. p. 17, where it introduces a "Variation by the Editor." Herr von der Lasa, I suppose, does not consider the claim thus asserted to be put beyond all question, inasmuch as honest Peter was certainly absolutely incapable of inventing any strong move whatsoever, not to say a stronger move than one of Philidor's.—Tr.

attention to a slip or two, which Philidor has made in this part of the game also. 1. KP<sub>2</sub>, KP<sub>2</sub>; 2. KBP<sub>2</sub>, P:P; 3. KKtB<sub>3</sub>, KBK<sub>2</sub>; 4. BQB<sub>4</sub>, KBKR<sub>5</sub>†; 5. KtP covers, P:P; 6. Castles, P:P†; 7. K to corner. Philidor gives to this variation of the Knight's Gambit, as Stamma had done before him, (although Stamma continues with 7. . . . QP<sub>2</sub>,) the name of "*Cunningham's Gambit*." The earlier English author, Bertin, however, (whose little book, now so very rare, Philidor was acquainted with,) calls it merely *The Three Pawns Game*, without attaching to it the name of any inventor. It has, therefore, been assumed by some writers, (as, for example, by Cochrane, 1822, p. 357,) that Bertin himself was the real inventor of this bold game. On this point, nothing can be affirmed with certainty. Philidor proceeds thus: BKB<sub>3</sub>; 8. KP on, QP<sub>2</sub>; 9. KP:B, Kt:P; 10. KBQKt<sub>3</sub>. Here Bertin (p. 6) makes Black castle; and then, after 11. QP<sub>2</sub>, KRP<sub>1</sub>, stops short, with the remark—"And the players may finish the game," without expressing any opinion which should win. In another place, however, he makes a general remark, from which we can see, that he, as Philidor did after him, considers Black to have the best of it; to the tenth, namely, of his Rules (p. vi) he adds these words: "But the defence, if well played, is still the best against the gambits, in which you change all your pieces, except the gambit that gives three pawns, [in] which [it] will be necessary to keep a rook, to conduct your pawns to the queen."

Philidor continues the game thus: QBK<sub>3</sub>; (*Second*

*Variation*) 11. QP2, KKt K5. This Variation is furnished by him in order to justify the censure, which he had pronounced on QP2 as the eleventh move of White, namely, that by so playing (instead of QP1) White would make an opening for Black's Knights, and thus speedily lose the game. It will be seen, however, that precisely in consequence of the entry of Black's Knight into White's game, (by KKt K5,) and by the consequent move of the King's Bishop's Pawn (KBP2) to support the Knight there, Black exposes himself, in Philidor's own continuation of the game, to very serious attacks. 12. QB KB4, KBP2; 13. QKt Q2, Q K2; 14. QBP2, QBP1; 15. P: P, P: P; 16. QR QB, QKt B3; 17. Kt: Kt, KBP: Kt; 18. Kt: Gambit P. (Here, by the way, Cozio [1766, vol. ii. p. 375] more correctly plays KtK5, with the advantage on White's side.) Castles KR; 19. Q Q2, KRP1. Another very questionable move. White would win, were he to take advantage of it by making the attack given in Bilguer's *Handbuch*, viz., 20. QB: KRP. But Philidor proceeds: 20. QR QB5, QR Q; 21. KB QR4, KKtP2; 22. QB K3, R: R†; 23. Kt: R, Q Q3; 24. Q KR2, K Kt2; 25. Q: Q, R: Q; 26. QRP1, K Kt3; 27. QKtP2, KRP1; 28. QKtP on, Kt K2; 29. R QB7, R Q2; which brings us to the position, from which we set out.

## II.

## PHILIDOR AS CHESS-PLAYER.



HAVING thus examined the *Analyse*, in reference to its value as a work of Chess-theory, it now remains to infer from it, what was Philidor's strength in actual play. Such inferences, it must be owned, are by no means certain, inasmuch as authors rarely appear so strong in their works, as in games played over the board. In the present case, however, it can be asserted with confidence, that, in spite of several inaccuracies in the *Analyse*, we derive from it a higher opinion of Philidor's strength in play, than from the games, (of which we have a considerable number,) which he played blindfold, or over the board at odds. Nearly all of the genuine games, that have been preserved to us of Philidor and other players of his day, were published by Mr. George Walker, in 1835, in a small volume, under the title of *A Selection of Games at Chess played by Philidor and his Contemporaries*. This author, who has enriched so many departments of Chess-literature by his valuable contributions, was enabled to throw some light upon the Philidorian Age, by becoming the fortunate purchaser of the Rev. George Atwood's Chess MSS., when the library of that celebrated mathematician was exposed to sale by auction. Mr. Atwood was known to have been among the admirers and associates of Philidor, and to have been himself, moreover, no mean Chess-player. His MSS.

proved to be his own record of many games, played, between 1780 and 1800, by Count Brühl, Mr. Wilson, Dr. Bowdler, Lord Harrowby, the Hon. Mr. Conway, Mr. Cotter, and Mr. Leycester, with De Beaurevoir, Philidor, Verdoni, and Mr. Atwood himself. These specimens are highly interesting to the studious inquirer; but—to speak quite frankly—they give no very high idea of the Chefs-skill of that day. Philidor, at any rate, was then in the evening of his life. In these games, the Old Master does indeed stand, under the keen inspection of our eyes, far higher than his fellows; but he is by no means secure against committing, now and then, a striking oversight. To explain how this should happen, one or two circumstances must be taken into consideration. Philidor had, at that time, crossed the boundary of threescore, and had, therefore, most certainly, long since left behind him the period of his greatest strength as a player,—a period, which cannot be considered as extending, upon an average, beyond the fortieth year of life. Nay, I am disposed to believe, that the limit of the most perfect correctness in play is, in very many cases, reached considerably earlier: the long-continued occupation with the business of life acts, with weakening effect, upon the power of *attention*, so essentially requisite in Chefs.

The second consideration, that operates to mitigate the severity of our judgment, rests upon the fact, that Philidor's adversaries were players of only moderate strength. Their weak and inaccurate style of play could not remain without its effect upon him. For it is a truth, well established by experience, that strong players, when engaged



with weak ones, can exert themselves only so far as to make sure of victory in a majority of games. The intensity, with which they exert their faculty of combination, is at first relaxed by carelessness, and afterwards by a hastiness, that has become a habit. To play, moreover, giving heavy odds, although it may compel the stronger player to exert his attention, does, nevertheless, affect him injuriously, upon the whole; because, in such games, he calculates of course, and may calculate too much, upon the oversights of his adversary.

If, under these complicated relations of the question, it is difficult to form a just estimate of Philidor's real strength, in comparison with that of his contemporaries, it cannot but be doubly difficult to bring an earlier age into comparison with a later one—especially when the later age is characterized by its remarkable advancement in Chess-science—and to determine how Philidor would rank among the players of the present day. The opinion, which I have, nevertheless, formed, is, that Philidor, when in the fulness and freshness of his strength, with the solid support of his talent for analysis, must have possessed the capacity to make his own any given measure of practical skill; but that his Chess-faculty had, by no means, attained, among such contemporaries, its highest possible degree of development; and that he, therefore, falls somewhat short of that accuracy of conception and that richness of combination, which we behold with wonder in the victorious contest of La Bourdonnais against the united book-knowledge and genius of M'Donnell.

The judgment, which I have thus pronounced upon

Philidor and his Age, to many may appear to be unjust. To give the reader an opportunity, therefore, to judge of its fairness and its soundness, I shall proceed to lay before him a few games from Mr. Walker's publication, with the accompaniment of some notes of my own. Before doing so, however, I must devote a few words to Philidor's playing without sight of board and men, or "blind-fold playing" (so called.) Nine such games of his—each *triad* whereof was played simultaneously—are familiar to all English-reading Chess-students, inasmuch as they are contained in every current edition of *PHILIDOR on Chess*. They first appeared in the new edition of the *Analyse*, which was published in the English language, at London, in 1790. This edition, which—if it had been really prepared by Philidor, as it bears his name, would be the third edition—exhibits indications, in the Preface and elsewhere, by which we recognise the fact, that it was merely superintended by the Publisher in the Author's name. The games in question belong to the years 1783, 1788, and 1790—to Philidor's old age, therefore; but even had they been the fruit of an earlier period, they could furnish no criterion of his ordinary play. Their special interest consists in the evidence, which they furnish, of Philidor's rare gift of imaginative presentation,—the power of keeping boards and men clearly before his "mind's eye,"—a gift that may be compared to the peculiar talent of those mental arithmeticians, who astound us by the portentous computations, which they carry on in their head alone. It is worthy of remark, that Philidor should have retained this gift to the day of his death.

He never exhibited it, however—so far as the number of his simultaneous games is concerned—in the fullest extent, to which it has been cultivated. Greater feats, of this kind, had been performed before his time; greater feats have also been performed in our own day, when Mr. Louis Paulsen plays blindfold *ten* games at once.\* Among the Asiatics, during the middle Ages, blindfold playing was so much a favourite mode of play, that the Oriental Chefs-authors give special instructions for it. In this way we learn the fact, that Asiatic amateurs, who could conduct three or four blindfold games at once, and at the same time recite verses, were by no means rare. Nay, there is also said to have been one player, in the East, who had gone to the extent of playing so many as ten such games at once.† These examples go far beyond what Philidor's art ever achieved. Several games in Walker's *Selection* show, that Philidor, blindfold, played even with antagonists, to whom, over the board, he was accustomed to give the Queen's Knight for the King's Bishop's Pawn and the move. And, upon the whole, it is reckoned, that Philidor, in blindfold play, was about a Pawn under his usual strength.

To proceed with the games from Walker's *Selection*. In 1788, Philidor gives the Pawn and two moves to M.

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\* In a letter, written some time after the date of the Essay, the author expresses his regret, that no account of Paul Morphy's blindfold playing, at Birmingham and in the *Café de la Régence*, had reached him, in season to enable him to place the name of the young American master by the side of Mr. Paulsen's.—Tr.

† Bland's *Persian Chefs*, p. 24.

de Beaurevoir. This gentleman, being at that time (according to Mr. Walker) a Chefs-player of high standing in France, had expected to be able to make a stand against Philidor at the Pawn and *one* move. He was beaten, notwithstanding, at the larger odds. Although the games of this match are by no means free from errors, they exhibit, in many places, a masterly judgment of position, on the part of Philidor. It must also be observed, that his adversary was not remarkably strong. He not only allowed himself to be visibly frightened by Philidor's play—as often happens to the weaker party in such a match—but in fact he really possessed hardly such a measure of talent, as would constitute him, at the present day, what is called a “second-rate” player—such a player as usually wins not more than one even game out of five from a master in Chefs.

FIRST GAME. (Remove Black's KBP from the board.)  
 1. (M. de Beaurevoir) KP2; 2. QP2, (Philidor) KP1;  
 3. KBP2. (KBP2 is no longer recommended at the present day; but formerly it was the usual move. I do not, therefore, condemn it as weak play on the part of Beaurevoir.) QP2; 4. KP on, QBP2; 5. QBP1, QKt B3; 6. KKt B3, Q QKt3; 7. QRP1, QRP2; 8. QRP on. (The two last moves of White show that he had as yet formed no plan how to use his Pieces for an attack—a proof either of embarrassment through fear, or of natural want of energy.) KKt R3; 9. KB Q3, QB Q2; 10. QKt R3, Castles; 11. QKt Kt5, KKt B2; 12. QB K3, QBP on; 13. KB QB2. (This retreat of the Bishop is disadvantageous. It would do better to go to K2, in

order to maintain the attack on Black's QB P. If Philidor should, thereupon, make the same move as he does in the actual game, White would get a very good attack: e. g., 13. KB K2, QKt Kt; 14. QKtP1, QB: Kt; 15. P: B, Q: P; 16. KKt Q2, or QKtP: P, QP: P; 17. QR R4, Q QKt7; 18. QB home, Q: QBP†; 19. B covers, Q QKt7; 20. KB: P, with a decisive attack.) QKt Kt; 14. QKt R3, Q: QKtP. (White would have done better to play 14. Castles, B: Kt; 15. P: B, Q: P; 16. Q Q2.) 15. Kt QKt5. (Here White sacrifices a Pawn, *possibly* for the purpose of getting room for his attack, but *probably* because he failed to see, that 15. Q QB would make his game safe at every point: Black could not then take QBP without losing his Queen.) B: Kt; 16. P: B, Q: QKtP; 17. KB QR4, Q QR3. (In hopes of getting a chance to play QKtP2, which would clear a space for defensive purposes. But the combination does not succeed. The Queen might have also drawn back to QKt3; but she could not have gone afterwards to QB2: the defence of QKtP would then have been too difficult.) 18. QR QKt, KB K2; 19. Castles, Q QR2 (a *coup de repos*;) 20. Q QB2, KKtP1; 21. R QKt5. (A singularly unskilful move. Black takes advantage of it immediately, to provide the necessary protection for his QKtP.) R Q2; 22. KR QKt, KKt Q; 23. R QKt6, KKt QB3; 24. KKtP2, KR KB; 25. KR P2, R QB2; 26. K Kt2. (A blunder. White now had a chance to call back his Rook from the idle adventure on which it had gone to QKt6, and so prevent its being cut off by Kt QKt5. After doing this, he might

have attempted, with the help of a Rook, to make a breach in Black's line of defence on the King's side. The Black Queen is still in an unfavourable position, and could not readily come to the rescue of the other wing.) Kt QKt5; 27. QR:Kt, P:R; 28. P:P, QKtP2. (Black loses no time to secure greater freedom of movement.) 29. KB:P, R QKt2; 30. KB:P. (White could have drawn his Bishop back, with the loss of a Pawn, to QR4. The sacrifice of 30. B:P is, perhaps, founded on a bold, but unsound, combination, which—even if it could have been completely carried out—would not have been decisive for White, viz.: 30. B:P, P:B; 31. Q:P†, KQ2; 32. QP on, Q:B; 33. P:P†, K home; 34. Q B8†, B covers, &c.) R QB2; 31. Kt Q2, P:B; 32. Kt:P, Q QKt2†; 33. K Kt3, QKt R3; 34. QK2, Kt:P. (Black could also have first played 33. Q Kt4; and then, upon 34. R QB, Kt QR3; [35. QK2, K Kt3;] 35. QP on, and *then* B:P.) 35. Kt Q6†, B:Kt; 36. P:B, R QB6; 37. K R2, R QB7; 38. QB Q2, KR:P. (Black's last move was a blunder—such a blunder as should never be made by a Master in Chess. KR:P gives White a chance possibly to draw the game; whereas K Q2 would have been a winning move. But White, as we shall see, does not avail himself of the chance thus given him. He replies with 39. Q:P†, without duly weighing all the consequences of the move. His attention may have been directed exclusively to the following combination: 39. R:Kt, Q:R; 40. Q:KP†, K QKt2; [41. Q K7†, K QR3; 42. Q K2†, Q covers, or K Kt3, &c.] 41. Q Q7†, K QR3; 42. K Kt3, Q:QP;

43. *B*: *R*, *Q* *Q*6†, &c.) 39. *Q*: *P*†, *K* *Q*. (If Black had moved instead to *Q* *K*t, he would just as little have cut off White's chance to draw, as may be seen by the following moves: 40. *Q* *K*8†, [*R* *Q* *B*; 41. *B*: *K* *R*,] *K* *Q* *R*7; 41. *Q* *Q* *R*4†, *Q* covers; 42. *Q* *Q*7†, *K* to corner; 43. *Q* *K*8†, *R* covers; 44. *P* *Q*7, &c.) 40. *Q* *K* *K*t8†, *K* *Q*2; 41. *Q*: *P*†, *K* *B*. (White could now draw by perpetual check.) 42. *Q*: *Q*†, *K*: *Q*; 43. *R*: *K*t†, *K* *B*3; 44. *K* attacks *R*, *K* *R* *K* *B*8; 45. *P* *Q*5†, *K*: first *P*. (Beaurevoir appears not to have been well skilled in end-games; otherwise, he would have played *B* *K*3, or still better *B* *K* *B*4, because the Bishop, besides protecting the Pawn, is also for the moment protected by the King.) 46. *R* *Q*4, *K* *K*4; 47. *R* *Q*3, *K* attacks *R*; 48. *R* *K*3†, *K*: *P*; 49. *R* *Q*3†. (White acts evidently upon the erroneous impression, that he is obliged to keep the Bishop at *Q*2.) *K* *K*5; 50. *R* *K*3†, *K* *Q*5; 51. *R* *K*2, *K* attacks *R*; 52. *R* attacks *P*, *K*: *B*; 53. *R*: *P*, *Q* *R* *B*6†; 54. *K* attacks *R*, *K* *R* *B*6; 55. *K* *R* *P* on, *Q* *R* *K*6; 56. *K* *R* *P* on, *K* *K*7 and wins.

SECOND GAME. (Remove Black's *K* *B* *P* from the board.)

1. (*M. de Beaurevoir*) *Q* *P*2; 2. *Q* *B* *P*2, (*Philidor*) *K* *P*1; 3. *K* *P*2, *K* *K*t *P*1; 4. *K* *B* *P*2. (I make no sort of remark upon these introductory moves, because skill in the openings depends upon study; and this branch of Chess-study is far more advanced now, than it was in the time of *Philidor*. I reserve all criticism for the game proper.) *Q* *P*2; 5. *Q* *B* *P*: *P*, *K* *P*: *P*; 6. *K* *P* on, *Q* *B* *P*2; 7. *K* *B* *Q* *K*t5†, *Q* *K*t *B*3; 8. *Q* *K*t *B*3, *Q* *R* *P*1; 9. *B*: *K*t†, *P*: *B*; 10. *Q* *B* *K*3, *P*: *P*; 11. *Q*: *P*, *K* *K*t *R*3; 12. *Q* *Q* *K*t6.

(In games at odds, the second player has usually a bad position, and is glad to bring about an exchange of Queens. Here it is White that offers the exchange. The position has, however, by this time become about equal, and I will not, therefore, condemn Q QKt6 as a sin against a general principle. The move is, nevertheless, to be blamed, because it must bring White into a bad position, or cause him the loss of a Pawn.) Q: Q; 13. B: Q, QR attacks B; 14. QKt R4, KB QKt5†; 15. K K2, Castles; 16. QRP1, KB K2; 17. KKtP1, QBP on; 18. QR QKt, (a perfectly useless move,) QB attacks R; 19. QR Q, QB K5; 20. KKt B3, QB QB7. (The Bishop might have gone at once to QB7. In that case, White's KKt would have kept his place. Beaurevoir was, I suspect, a player, to whom Philidor could have given the Knight: the Master, therefore, plays carelessly.) 21. QB: P, B: R†; 22. R: B, B: B; 23. Kt: B, R: P†; 24. K B, Kt KB4; 25. R Q3, KR QB; 26. Kt QKt3, KR QB7; 27. QKt Q2, QP on; 28. K K2, QR QR7; 29. Kt: P. (White should have prepared this move by KKt P on. Philidor, however, did not take advantage of the blunder, which ought (as Walker remarks) to have cost White the loss of a Piece.) Kt: Kt. (R: Kt† would have been the better move. Both this game and that which follows it exhibit such serious blemishes that I should not ascribe them to Philidor, if there were the slightest reason to doubt the genuineness of the Atwood MSS., which Walker made use of for his *Selection*.—I may take this occasion also to guard myself against the suspicion of having, on purpose, chosen defective games, in order to make



out my café: the games, which I am now annotating, are taken precisely as they come—the three, first—in Walker's book.) 30. R:Kt, R:P; 31. KtP on, QR KR6; 32. KBP on, R:P†; 33. KQ, KR:Kt†; 34. R:R, R:R†; 35. K:R, P:P; 36. P:P, KRP2; 37. KP on, QRP on and wins.

THIRD GAME. (Remove Black's KBP from the board.) 1. (M. de Beaurevoir) KP2; 2. QP2, (Philidor) KP1; 3. QBP2, KKtP1; 4. KBP2, QP2; 5. QBP:P, P:P; 6. KP on, QBP2; 7. KB QKt5†, QKt B3. (Thus far this game is quite like the second; only that a move or two are transposed. The players appear, therefore, to have had a good memory for the mode, in which they had played before. The two first games were played at the same sitting, on the 31st of May, 1788. The third followed in April.) 8. KKt B3, Q QKt3; 9. QKt B3, P:P; 10. KKt:P, KB pins Kt; 11. QB K3, KKt K2; 12. QRP1, KB QB4.

(Walker, who accompanies the games with only here and there a note, says here, that (Black) 12. KB:QKt† would *apparently* have been better. It is clear, therefore, that he perceived, as little as Beaurevoir, (who continued with 13. QKtP2,) the gross blunder, which Black had fallen into—a blunder, which should have cost him a Piece. The oversight is all the more striking, that the Bishop—if it had been well for him to stand at QB4—could have gone thither two moves earlier, instead of going to QKt5. At that moment, KB QB4 could have been made without disadvantage. The consequences would have been somewhat as follows:—11. QKt QR4,

Q QR4†; 12. QB covers, KB QKt5; 13. QKt B3, KKt K2; 14. *Castles*. The following Variation shows the necessary consequences of the moves actually made:—  
 13. QKt QR4, Q checks; 14. QKtP covers, KB: P†; 15. QRP: B, Q: P†; 16. KB2. There is no strength in Black's passed Pawns. The position of his Queen is bad likewise. Besides, White can force an exchange of Queens, if he likes. In an ancient Persian MS., presented by Major Yule to the British Museum, (No. 151,) and described by Bland, (pp. 18–25,) we find it related, that “in India there was a player, who, during forty years, never had a Pawn taken from him gratis.” The Persian author adds, “We have never beheld success like this.” That ancient Indian Chess-player must have possessed the power of attention in a far higher degree than Philidor in 1788.)

The Game proceeds—13. QKtP2, B: Kt; 14. B: B, Q QB2; 15. QB QB5, QB K3; 16. QB: Kt, Q: B; 17. Kt: P, Q Q (Black's game is desperate;) 18. Kt KB6†, K B2; 19. Q KB3, Q QKt3; 20. B: Kt, P: B; 21. Kt K4, B pins Kt; 22. Kt Q6†, K Kt2; 23. Q KB2, KR KB; 24. KR B, QR Q (in hopes, evidently, to get some chance to take off the Knight, who was steadily maintaining his position;) 25. Q: Q, P: Q; 26. KKtP1, KRP2; 27. KRP2, (a move by no means unwelcome to Black, inasmuch as it takes from the strength of the White Pawns, and gives greater security to the connexion between Black's Bishop and his Pawns.) QKtP on, (thus getting all his Pawns on white squares.) 28. K B2, R: Kt. (Walker remarks on this move, which Black had

been for a long time getting ready to make, that "the sacrifice was uncalled for." But upon this move hung Black's last hope of possibly drawing the game; because by getting the troublesome Knight out of the way, the Bishop gains in strength. Although Philidor did not succeed, even by this move, in extricating himself entirely from his difficulties, he nevertheless proved himself to have been a far abler judge of the position, than the Editor of his games.) 29. P : R, KR Q; 30. KR K, R : QP; 31. KR K 5, B K 3; (because, posted here, the Bishop closes up the game, commands the squares at KB<sub>4</sub> and KKt<sub>5</sub>, and releases the Rook, which otherwise was threatened with being shut up by QR Q.) 32. QR K, K B<sub>3</sub>.

Walker remarks that the game was drawn, but that "the remainder was, unfortunately, not taken down." Beaurevoir (he adds) "could only have allowed his adversary to draw the game through some important miscalculation," inasmuch as he had "a decided advantage." From these words it is clear, that Walker did not entirely understand the nature of this end-game. Beaurevoir cannot have played R : B†, or this very elegant and decisive move (which evidently was not thought of by Walker) would have been noted down and preserved with the rest. White failed of winning the game, I suspect, because he was not fully aware of the Bishop's strength for defence, and therefore did not take him off at all, or took him off in a less favourable position than the present. The consequences of taking him off at this moment would have been as follows:—1. R : B†, R : R; 2. R : R†, K : R; 3. KB<sub>3</sub>, KB<sub>4</sub>; 4. KtP†, P : P†; 5.

$KKt3$ ,  $KK3$ ; 6.  $K:P$ ,  $KB3$ ; 7.  $KBP$  on,  $P:P†$ ; 8.  $KB4$  and wins, because, while the Black King is taking  $KRP$ , the White King will be moving over to the other side of the board, and the Black King will be too far behind him to be able to protect his Pawns at  $QB3$  and  $QKt4$ . There are other Variations, (as *e. g.* where the Black King goes over at once to the Queen's side,) but by all of them Black must lose.

It would lead me too far, were I to present more games accompanied with full notes. Suffice it to repeat, that all of these games of Philidor's old age, taken from the Atwood MSS., contain such oversights as, under other circumstances, would rarely occur between good players. The games, moreover, taken all together—even when no odds are given (as in many of the blindfold-games)—are played entirely in the spirit of that *Chefs-period*—that is to say, with that want of elegance and brilliancy—nay, with that *clumsiness*—in planning the combinations, which then prevailed throughout the North of Europe.

During Philidor's last days, immediately preceding his death, his strength in play must have fallen off considerably, for he gave lighter odds. Atwood had been accustomed to take the Queen's Knight, or the Queen's Rook, for the King's Bishop's Pawn—on one occasion, for the Queen's Bishop's Pawn. He appears, however, as the winner, in the majority of those games of Walker's *Selection*, that belong to the summer of 1795. And the change certainly was not on Atwood's side. He did not play particularly well—as may be seen by the following opening moves of a game, which bears date the 24th of

June, 1795, precisely two months, therefore, before Philidor's death :—(Philidor gives QR for KBP, and has the move)—1. KP<sub>2</sub>, KP<sub>1</sub>; 2. QP<sub>2</sub>, QP<sub>2</sub>; 3. KP on, QBP<sub>2</sub>; 4. QBP<sub>1</sub>, P : P; 5. P : P, KB†; 6. K K<sub>2</sub>, QKt P<sub>1</sub>; 7. Q QR<sub>4</sub>†, QKt Q<sub>2</sub>; 8. Q : B, B QR<sub>3</sub>†; 9. K K, B : B; 10. K : B, QR QB; 11. QKt B<sub>3</sub>, Q KR<sub>5</sub>; &c. The game has become reasonably equal, considering that the first player had given the Rook; but Philidor lost it, at last, for no other reason, than because he failed to seize the initiative in the later combinations. On the 28th and 29th of June, he gave Atwood only the Pawn and Two Moves, in games, which were perhaps the last he ever played: these games he won. In January 1796, Verdoni gave the same Odds with success to Atwood, after having failed in the attempt to give him the Knight. It would appear from this, that Verdoni—whom Sarratt, from personal acquaintance, designates, in his Treatise, (1808, p. xxii.,) as “incontestably a player of the first order”—may probably have favoured Atwood. If such were not the case, then we might agree with Walker (1835, p. 74) in his inference, that “while the games of Verdoni evince unquestionable talents for invention, they prove the immeasurable superiority of Philidor.” Verdoni died at London about the year 1804. As to what his real strength was, in comparison with that of Philidor, we happen to possess precise information. We learn, namely, from a letter of Deschappelles to the late celebrated Astronomer, Schumacher of Altona, (printed in the *Berliner Schachzeitung* for 1848, pp. 274 and 327,) that Philidor did indeed give Verdoni the Pawn,

but that he reserved to himself the Move. The difference of strength thus indicated was so slight, that in our day no attempt would be made to equalize it by any kind of Odds.

But Walker does not stop with inferring the inferiority of Verdoni to Philidor: he crosses the boundary of the eighteenth century, and, by assuming that Sarratt was exactly equal to Verdoni, establishes a means of comparison between the earlier and the later age, and comes to the conclusion, that Philidor would have proved decidedly superior to the Chefs-masters of the present day. But this comparison rests on too uncertain a foundation. For, in the first place, as to the real strength of Verdoni, Sarratt may have rated it too high;—since in his Treatise (1808, p. 6,) he intimates, that his relations to Verdoni were those of a mere beginner to an adept.\* Under such circumstances, the experienced player might well appear to him to be greater than he really was. In the next place, there is absolutely nothing to go upon to prove that Sarratt stood upon the same level with Verdoni. I think myself authorized to say, that the assumption of such equality is certainly erroneous. The later generation of Chefs-players has not, indeed, shewn itself particularly grateful for the hasty labours of Sarratt as a Chefs-

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\* From a letter of Mr. Lewis's to me, (as well as from Walker, *Selections*, p. 61, *note*,) it appears that Sarratt stood to Verdoni in the relation of a *Pupil* to a *Teacher*: "Verdoni" (he says) "was Sarratt's master, and was scarcely, if at all, inferior to Philidor, although he learned the game in middle age."—TR.

*author*, although he really did good service, between the publication of his *Treatise* in 1808 and his death in 1821, both by his own works and by his abridged translations of the old Masters; but even less justice appears to have been meted out to him as a *Chess-player*. Lewis—who in April 1821 had played with Deschappelles and was acquainted with the other Masters of that day—"asserts, without hesitation," of Sarratt, on the 30th of November, 1822, (in the Preface to his translation of Carrera,) "that he was the finest and most finished player he had ever seen, alike excellent in attack and defence."\* According to this, the efforts of Sarratt in practical skill could not for a moment be put on the same level with the moderately well-played games of Verdoni in Walker's *Selection*. I abide, therefore, by the opinion, that the players of the second half of the last century were inferior to the Chess-masters of the more recent period. There can be no doubt, that the modern habit of making Chess a subject of theoretical study—whether by private reading, or by playing with skilful book-players—has contributed not a little to such superiority of our age over

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\* Mr. Lewis still expresses the same opinion. I may without impropriety give his very words; for although they occur in a private letter, they are but the specification of the general statement made public in 1822. "If the perfection of Chess-playing" (he writes) "consists in making the best moves with the greatest rapidity, La Bourdonnais approached perfection nearer than any player I have ever known. I should, however, have backed both Deschappelles and SARRATT (both slow players) against him, thinking them a shade better." (*Letter to G. A., March 5th, 1860.*)—TR.

the part. The arduous labours of the Chefs-author—in which I may claim to have had my share—find their reward in the assurance, that they have been successful in attaining the object they aimed at,—to raise the standard and the character of actual play.

Another element, to assist in determining the strength of Philidor, is furnished by a game, which was published by La Bourdonnais in the first volume of the *Palamède*, (1836,) p. 392. It was played by him against the “Amateurs,” Carlier and Bernard. Deschapelles knew them both, and says, that when playing singly with Philidor, they received from him the Pawn and Move; but that when they played against him consulting, Philidor either lost, at these odds, or succeeded with difficulty in drawing the game. The following game, which dates from the year 1780, must be the oldest recorded specimen of a “Consultation-game.” Philidor gives KBP, and loses by his own fault.—1. (Carlier and Bernard) KP2, (Philidor) KP1; 2. QP2, QP2; 3. P: P, P: P; 4. Q R5†, P covers; 5. Q K5†, Q covers; 6. QB KB4, QBP1; 7. KB K2, KB Kt2; 8. Q: Q†, Kt: Q; 9. KKt B3, Castles; 10. QB K5, QKt Q2; 11. Castles, QKt: B; 12. Kt: Kt. (“White retakes with the Knight,” says the *Palamède*, “in order to enable KBP afterwards to support the Knight.” We shall, however, presently see, that both parties, for several moves, failed in forming a correct judgment of the position, which really gave Black a chance to win back his Pawn. The question, whether the Pawn would have been lost just as well, if White had played 12. P: P, I do not pause to examine thoroughly: appa-



rently, the Pawn might in that case have been safe.) B: Kt; 13. P: B, KR B5. (The Rook goes one square too far: it should have stooped at B4. In that case, White's passed Pawn would have been lost. For the game must then have proceeded thus: 14. KBP2, KKtP on; 15. P: P, R: BP, and KP cannot be saved. This combination was observed, neither by the parties nor by the *Palamede*, which ascribes the loss of the game by Philidor to the fact, that Black, by 12. B: Kt, allowed White to get a passed Pawn.) 14. KB Q3, QB KB4; 15. B: B, Kt: B. (Philidor's moves lead, in the simplest possible way, to his defeat. It is difficult to see why he did not contrive to adopt another line of play. He still had it in his power to take off the passed Pawn: e. g. 15. . . . R: B; 16. KBP2, KKtP on; 17. P: P, R: BP. The game might then have proceeded somewhat as follows: 18. R K, Kt Kt3; 19. KP on, R K4; 20. Kt Q2, QR K, and Black wins the Pawn without danger.) 16. KKtP1, KR K5; 17. KBP2, KR K7; 18. QKt R3, Kt K6; 19. KR B2, R: R; 20. K: R, Kt KKt5†; 21. K Kt2, QR Q; 22. KRP1, Kt KR3; 23. KKtP on, QRP1; 24. QR Q, Kt KB2; 25. KRP on, QBP on; 26. QBP1, QKtP2; 27. Kt QB2, QRP1; 28. Kt K3, QP on; 29. P: P, P: P; 30. Kt QB2, QP on; 31. Kt K, QP on; 32. Kt KB3 and wins. This game appears to me to be well calculated to confirm the opinion, which I have before expressed, concerning the Chess-skill of Philidor and his contemporaries.

I close this discussion, by passing in review the succession of great players, who have figured during the latest

period of Chefs-history. The list begins with M. de Kermuy, Sire de Légal. He attained to a very advanced old age—to nearly ninety years. He was the teacher of Philidor; but it was settled, by the match of 1755, that the master was decidedly inferior to his pupil. Up to the time of his death, however, Légal maintained his rank as the second player of France. Philidor was the first up to 1795. Of the same period, and associated with him, were the Syrian Stamma, the so-called *Amateurs*, Léger, Carlier, and Bernard, and especially Verdoni. The contemporary Italians, Rio, Ponziani, and Lolli did not come into contact with the Chefs-masters of Paris and London. We know nothing of any Spanish players of that period. The annals of Chefs say as little of any contemporary German celebrities. Count Brühl, to be sure, (1737–1809,) nephew of the Saxon Minister, so celebrated in the time of Frederic the Great, a German, but resident in England for the greater part of his life, is named among the best of the English players. Like them, however, he was decidedly inferior to Philidor. The transition from the last to the present century is formed by Verdoni, Carlier, and Bernard. With these players, whose celebrity dated from the former period, the earliest heroes of this century, Sarratt and Deschappelles were acquainted. To the same class we should, perhaps, refer Hypolite du Bourblanc, who perished by shipwreck in 1813. Sarratt, who had been on terms of “intimate and uninterrupted friendship” with him since 1798, mentions, (1821, vol. i. p. 29,) that his “remarkable genius and *brilliancy* of attack” were said to be re-

produced in the style of "the celebrated *Guillaume le Prêton*" (meaning Deschappelles.) In Germany, Allgaier crosses the boundary-line of the two centuries. Next after him, about the year 1820, comes Mendheim, of Berlin. Neither of these eminent players ever measured their strength with each other or with any of the foreign celebrities. Of Sarratt also no matches are known; and, in like manner, the first of the Russian great names, Petroff, has never—from the year 1824 to the present moment—come into contact with the West. It is only during the very last years, that America has begun to be heard from in the world of Chefs.

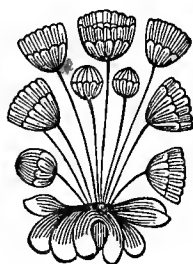
In France, Le Breton Deschappelles ranked for a long time as the first player. He distinguished himself, in 1821, against La Bourdonnais and Cochrane. During the same year, he gave the odds of the Pawn and Move, in three games, to Mr. Lewis, but without success. These three games were first made public by Greenwood Walker, in 1836, from the original minutes of the English player. Mr. Lewis, however, has informed me, very lately,\* that in writing down the games from memory, he had, unfortunately, transposed some of the moves in one of them. It is from this game, that the Position is taken, which is discussed in the *Schachzeitung* for 1855, (p. 17.) It was expected, that a second match would have been contested between Lewis and Deschappelles, in 1836; but the negotiation was ultimately

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\* A part of the only day (March 8th, 1858) spent by the author in London, on his way to Rio Janeiro, was devoted to paying a visit to Mr. Lewis.—Tr.

broken off. Since that time the death of the French player has occurred, and the English master has withdrawn entirely from the practice of the game. The two celebrated pupils of these great players respectively—La Bourdonnais, who was at the height of his fame in 1836, and M'Donnell—were prematurely lost to Chefs, by death, before their masters. We retain at the present moment, therefore, only one great living witness of the period, that has just passed away.

The links, still untold, in the chain of my enumeration, are the players of the two last decades of years, of whom some are now dead, some still on the stage. Their names are too well known to need recital by me.





## APPENDIX.

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### CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

P. 4. Note \*. See especially the article *Des Maîtrises* in a recent work, *La Musique à l'Eglise par M. J. d'Ortigue*. Paris 1861. "Elles [les Maîtrises] les renvoyaient à l'abri du foyer domestique . . . pourvus d'une éducation le plus souvent supérieure à celle des populations au milieu desquelles ils vivaient, et qui leur permettait de trouver de suffisants moyens d'existence dans l'exercice de quelque profession honorable." (P. 85.)

P. 12. *Philidor himself was living abroad at the time*. So I inferred from Twiss's citation from the *Encyclopédie*; but he had left out the closing words of the article, viz., *Il est maintenant à Paris*, which, however, have the appearance of being added after the body of the article had been written.

P. 21. Philidor undoubtedly went with Lanza as a *Singer*. I find, in the *Mercure français* for May 1770, that he sung one of his own *Motets* in a *Concert Spirituel* of that year.

P. 29. My friend, Mr. William R. Henry—whose knowledge of problem-literature is absolutely exhaustive—has pointed out to me an earlier *Spießruthenspiel*, than Don Pietro Petronio's, in Gianutio (1597) f. 48, Ottavo partito *sutilissimo di dieci tratti*.

P. 36. These important facts (unknown even to Twiss) are given by Gerber upon better authority than mere gossip and tradition: he found them in the *Almanachs* and other authentic printed documents of the day. This I learn from my friend Mr. Thayer, (now in Vienna,)

who has had occasion to collect and use the same documents for the Life of Beethoven, to which he has already devoted so many years of study and preparation.—In estimating Philidor's pecuniary resources, (p. 89,) I neglected to mention the fact, that—besides being a pensioner of Louis XV.—he was also *Maître de Chapelle* to the Duke of Deux Ponts, an appointment to which, undoubtedly, some salary was attached. This fact also rests upon the sole authority of Gerber; but we have seen that he is careful to “speak by the card;” and he is sustained (to some extent) by Philidor's dedication of his *Tom Jones* to *S. A. S. Monseigneur le Duc Régnant des Deux Ponts, Prince Palatin du Rhin, Duc de Bavière, &c., &c.*

P. 58. Note. The career of a grandson of Philidor's—Alphonse, a violinist and pupil of Baillot—is beautifully traced by M. Scudo, in the second volume of his *Critique et Littérature Musicales*.

Pp. 66–8. I have made sad work, in my text, with the relations of Philidor and Gluck, because the authorities, on which I was forced to rely, were all bent on being wrong in some way: Fétis, in particular, who, in the substance of his defence, is certainly right, is inexcusably wrong in some of the details; and Sévelinges, who is essentially and wickedly wrong, in the gift and *animus* of his accusation, is, after all, right where Fétis is wrong. Now that I have the help of the original authority, Favart, I will try to put these matters to rights here.—A year before the representation of Philidor's *Sorcier*—viz., early in 1763—Gluck's friend, Count Durazzo, sent the score of the *Orfeo* to his correspondent, Favart, to have it engraved in Paris. Favart applied to Duni to correct the proofs. This Duni positively refused to do, on any terms; because, on examining the “copy,” he found it full of errors, which he would not take the responsibility or the trouble of correcting. At length, on the 19th of April, Favart writes to the Count:—“I have had the score shown to Philidor, and he does not prove by any means so hard to deal with as the rest. He offers to make the preliminary corrections of the score *gratis*, and to superintend the engraving in person. He asks nothing of your Excellency but a copy of the work. While reading the score, at several places, he was affected to tears. He always held the talents of the Chevalier Gluck

in high esteem; but now that he has come to know the *Orfeo*, his esteem has risen to veneration." (*Mémoires*, t. ii. p. 102.)—André Philidor is, therefore, wrong: it was the engraving, and not the representation, of the *Orfeo*, (before it became the *Orphée*), which his father superintended. Sévelinges is wrong (and, judging by the spirit of his article, calumniously wrong) in charging, that Philidor stole from the *Orfeo*, note for note, the romance, *Objet de mon amour*. Fétis is right in refuting this charge of plagiarism by appealing to an inspection of the two scores, and thus demonstrating that the *corpus delicti* was a nonentity; but he is wrong, in turn, when he says, that Philidor could not have known the *Orfeo* in season to commit the theft. He is wrong, moreover, in saying, that Sévelinges charged Philidor with the plagiarism on the authority of Favart: Sévelinges merely cites Favart to show, that Philidor had in his hands the score of the *Orfeo* while at work on his own *Sorcier*.\* Fétis is also wrong, in so far as he creates the impression, that Favart regarded Philidor as a plagiarist: Favart uniformly expresses himself as the friend and admirer of Philidor. And, finally, Fétis is carelessly wrong in saying, (as he does, in his second edition,) that it was Duni who superintended the engraving of the *Orfeo*.

P. 70. Note. More than this—Mr. Fiske has shown (*Chefs Monthly* for January 1861,) that Count Brühl went to Paris in September 1755, (a year after Philidor's return home,) and lived there, as an *attaché* of the Saxon embassy, until March 1759. The "last visit" was probably that which he made (according to Mr. Fiske) in 1785.

P. 74. I have fortunately disinterred, from the *Mercur français* for August 1771, the original Prospectus of Philidor's Second Edition. Considering the date, it becomes highly probable, that Philidor's trip

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\* Fétis would have done better service, if he had driven his stake through Sévelinges, as a logical *felo de se*: the shortighted *advocatus diaboli* proves, namely, that Philidor must certainly have committed the alleged theft, by proving that Philidor had, six months before, put it in the power of every musician and musical critic in Paris to make instant detection and exposure of the theft.

to England in 1772 was made (under the encouragement of Count Brühl and other friends) for the special purpose of obtaining subscribers to his book, and that a part of the list was formed before the Chefs-Club was organized, and the final arrangement made for his annual visit.

P. 75. Note †. Of course, I based my argument upon the belief, that "notre milord Goy" was fairly equal to "our English friend, Goy," who—being, in French parlance, a *milord anglais*—might be a Peer, and could not be less than a gentleman. I knew not whether to be more amazed or amused, when I stumbled upon the evidence, in Walckenaer's *Vie d'Horace*, (t. i. p. 383,) that "mylord Goy" was the *sobriquet* of a remarkable French *farceur*—an *obligato* appendage of the highest Parisian society—of whom Favart (t. ii. p. 239) tells a strange anecdote. But such men take the best care of themselves—when they have money; and my argument may still, perhaps, be as sound as ever.



















